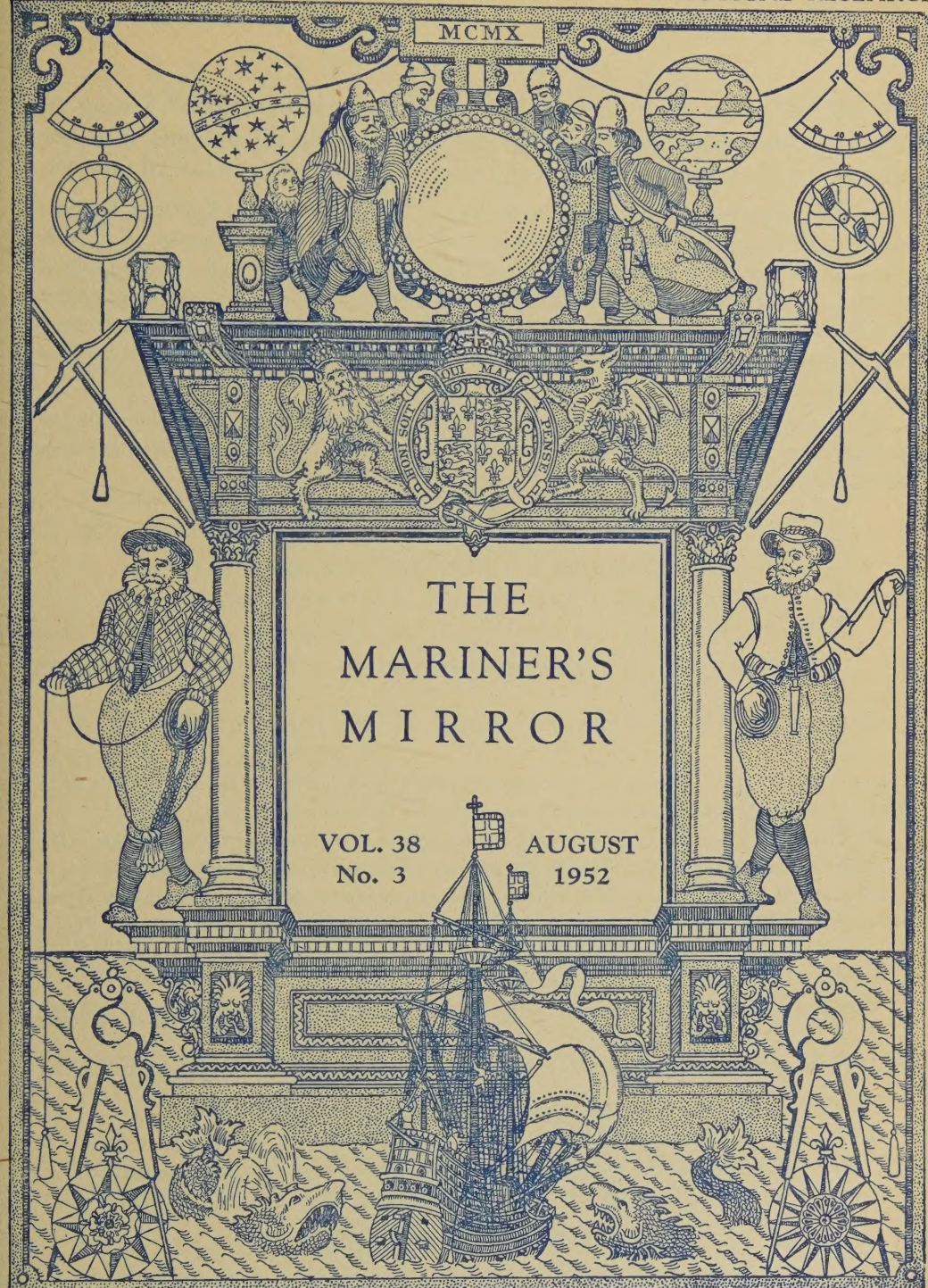


THE QUARTERLY JOURNAL of the SOCIETY FOR NAUTICAL RESEARCH



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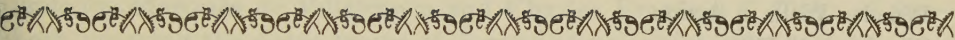
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CONTENTS

ARTICLES	PAGE
GALLEONS AND 'Q' SHIPS IN THE SPANISH CONSPIRACY AGAINST VENICE IN 1618. By G. B. Rubin de Cervin	163
LORD NELSON AND THE LOSS OF HIS ARM. By Captain H. T. A. Bosanquet, R.N.	184
MAURITIUS 1810. By Brigadier H. A. Joly de Lotbinière.	195
THE SOCIETY'S ANNUAL LECTURE	
THE HISTORY OF THE MAGNETIC COMPASS. By Commander W. E. May, R.N.	210
NOTES	
The Dating of 'The Duke of York's Supplementary Orders, 1672'—The Lubber's Point—The Figure-head of the <i>Prince Royal</i> , 1610—Three Jacobean Warships—Queen Victoria's Funeral—H.M.S. <i>Anglia</i> —An Early Form of Sea Anchor—The Three L's—The Fighting Ship from 1860 to 1890—Nicholas Tomlinson in Russia—Calling the Soundings— 'Destined Voyage' in Early Registers—Captain Cook's Wife—Biblio- graphy of Sutherland and Euler—The Oldest Midshipman—'The Ninth of January, of All Days'	223

QUERIES

PAGE

French Gun Carriages—Early Ship Lanterns—Naval Sixpences—‘Down
Funnel: Up Screw’—Ships’ Complements—Scurvy—Inferior Ships—
‘To Warm the Bell’—Seventeenth-century Instructions—‘Molgogger’
and ‘Podger’

237

ANSWERS

Shanty—Dry-land Ships—The First Aircraft Carrier—Davit—The Bitter
End—Cruiser—Admiral Lawson

240

REVIEWS

Captain James Cook, R.N. 244
Boats and Boatmen 244
Joseph Conrad 245
Wooden Walls in Action 245
The Norfolk Wherry 246
Syria, xxviii (1951); Antiquités de Beth-Maré 246
Five Naval Journals, 1789–1817 247

PLATES

1. Lorenzo Venier, Commander-in-Chief of the Venetian Fleet *Between pages*
168–9
2. Pietro Barbarigo ”
3. Sheer Plan of the ‘Q’ Ship which was presented to the
Viceroy of Naples 176–7
4. Deck Plan of the ‘Q’ Ship showing the close resemblance
to a Galleass ”
5. Stern View of the ‘Q’ Ship ”
6. View of the ‘Q’ Ship under Sail with Oars Steeved
upwards ”
7. Facsimile of a Letter from Sir Horatio Nelson,
5 October 1797 194–5

GALLEONS AND 'Q' SHIPS IN THE SPANISH CONSPIRACY AGAINST VENICE IN 1618

By G. B. Rubin de Cervin

IN the early years of the seventeenth century when Spain ruled over the greater part of the Italian peninsula, the Venetian Republic was one of the few States left which still held on grimly to her independence, although dark war clouds were closing in from all points of the compass. In 1606 her political and strategical position had become critical when diplomatic relations were broken off with the Vatican State, the episode very nearly leading to a European conflagration. Things were hardly patched up when in the west the new Spanish Governor of Milan, Don Pedro Alvarez de Toledo, Marqués de Villafranca and Charles Emanuel I, Duke of Savoy, both ignoring the peace treaty of Asti of 1615, which they had previously signed, were about to come to blows again, thus forcing the Republic to maintain a considerable force along her Lombardy borders and to meet new expenses which were rapidly draining her resources. But the spark which was to set on fire the rest of Italy came from the east and was caused by the depredations of the Uzcock pirates who were sheltering along the Dalmatian coast. These adventurers were mostly made up of Slav refugees who had fled from the Balkans during the many Turkish invasions, and had settled down in the citadel of Clissa. Later, under Turkish pressure, they were compelled to move northwards to Segna. By 1615 shipping conditions in the Adriatic had become so precarious that a Venetian naval force, under the command of the 'Provveditore contra Uscocchi' Lorenzo Venier, was ordered to smoke once for all these pirates out of their new stronghold (which legally belonged to the Hapsburg Imperial Family). But unfortunately this action only caused a new war between Austria and Venice which suddenly flared up from the Istrian coasts to the Italian northern mainland.¹ By the autumn of 1616 hostilities had again broken out in Piedmont and in the Milanese, and foreign troops were pouring into northern Italy. But soon other events of historical importance were about to take place. From the south the Viceroy of Naples, Don Pedro Téllez Giron y Guzman, tercer Duque de Osuna, segundo Marqués de Peñafel, sétimo Conde de Ureña, had been urged by the Archduke Ferdinand to lend a hand to his troops who at that moment were in a sorry plight near Gorizia, hard pressed by the Venetian Army, under the command of the

¹ Historical references regarding the Uzcock problem are reported at the end of this article.

'Provveditore' Pompeo Giustiniani.¹ Osuna, who was a man of wild ambitions and had been nursing vast plans against the Venetian Republic, was only too willing to seize such an opportunity, and at once caused a diversion by proclaiming a ban on all commercial traffic to and from Venice and opening the ports of Bari and Brindisi to the Uzcock pirates.²

This Duke of Osuna, one of the principal characters of the story, was born in 1574 in the small town of which he bore the name and could trace his descent from the days of the Cid Campeador and since 1032, the Gironss had ranked in Spain as a family of royal blood.³ The present Don Pedro at the age of 28 was sent soldiering to Flanders at the head of his own cavalry regiment, where he soon won a reputation for skill and daring, and, for his gallant behaviour at the capture of Grool (1604), was appointed Captain-General and Viceroy of Sicily, but joined his post only in 1611.⁴ In the governorship of that island he did excellent work in reorganizing the Administration and in stamping out brigandage. He also devoted much care in building up a small fleet for himself which he sent roving in the Mediterranean on many piratical expeditions.⁵ By 1615 he had assembled for certain two round ships, one big galley *La Capitana*, and three more *La Verde*, *La Negra* and *La Concepcion*, besides a few minor craft. All this, says Duro, was achieved 'sine tocar a las rentas de la Corona'.⁶

It must be noted that these ships were not flying the Royal Spanish ensign, but in place of it the Viceroy's own standard which consisted of 'un quadrete de raso negro con sus armas, bordado con la insignia de la Concepcion', while the sails of his ships were striped white and blue.⁷

Osuna's strange behaviour was not immune from severe criticisms, mainly from the Spanish Admiralty, but for the time being no steps were taken to halt him in his proceedings for in Madrid he still seemed to be enjoying the protection of the powerful Duke of Uceda.⁸ By many Spanish historians Osuna is ranked little short of a genius. Don Francisco Quevedo calls him 'el màs leal vasallo, el màs acertado gobernador, humano, generoso, pio, valiente',⁹ while Don Modesto Lafuente considers him 'unos

1 Archivio di Stato di Venezia. Senato Secreta. Dispacci d'Olanda, marzo 1617 e Deliberazioni, aprile 1617. Part of the Venetian Army was made up of Dutch troops which numbered 3000 infantrymen, under the command of John of Nassau.

2 A. Luzio, *La Congiura Spagnola contro Venezia nel 1618*, secondo i documenti dell' Archivio Gonzaga. Miscellanea di Storia Veneta. S. III, p. 22, t. XXII (Venezia, 1918). References are often made to *Collección de Documentos inéditos para la Historia de España* (Madrid, 1865).

3 Bethencourt, *Historia genealógica y heráldica de la Monarquía Española*. Also J. Perthes, *Almanach de Gotha*, 1903.

4 C. F. Duro, *El Grande Duque de Osuna y su Marina* (Madrid, 1885), p. 25.

5 *Ibid.* p. 29.

6 *Ibid.* p. 28.

7 *Ibid.* pp. 48, 279.

8 *Ibid.* p. 169.

9 *Ibid.* pp. 50, 57.

de los mayores politicos de su siglo'.¹ Of course some Italian contemporaries judged him differently and Girolamo Frascetta, the Duke of Urbino's Resident in Naples, in a letter addressed to his Lord dated 12 February 1611, gives a rather unflattering picture and calls him 'un soldataccio di Fiandra, ma soprattutto sa poco'.² During all his life Osuna seems to have been obsessed by the one idea of bringing Venice to heel; whether it was to increase his well-established reputation or for religious motives (he considered the Republic of Venice an heretical State), must remain a subject of speculation; probably a mixture of the two. But Don Pedro is not entirely to blame for the events which were to take place, and Philip III, that superstitious weakling and his Government, must share the blame for the hopelessly vague and contradictory orders which often were given to him. In 1616 he was appointed Viceroy of Naples and on 27 April, with true regal pomp, he entered the town.

In view of possible complications in the Adriatic, Osuna soon increased his naval forces by the addition of six new vessels, some of which were built in the Arsenal of Naples, Admiral Don Francisco Ribera receiving the command of the force. The squadron comprised the flagship *La Concepción* of 52 guns, *l'Almirante* 34, *Buenaventura* 27, *La Carretina* 34, *San Juan Bautista* 30 and *Santiago* 14.³ Duro says that there was a plan of using these ships in an attempt to intercept a convoy of Dutch vessels which were known to be on their way from the Netherlands to Venice, but at the last moment Philip III on hearing this, cancelled the operation orders which had been previously issued by Osuna.⁴ Thus Venice and Spain were drifting into a war which, strangely enough, was never to be declared, and even when hostilities did break out, diplomatic relations between the two countries went on as usual. So Piero Gritti remained the Serenissime's Ambassador in Madrid, Gaspare Spinelli her Resident in Naples, while Don Alonzo de la Queva, Marqués de Bedmar, went on being His Most Catholic King's representative in Venice.

At the beginning of 1617, in a dispatch from Naples dated 13 January, Spinelli was writing to his government that 'They are collecting ships for an expedition, but it is not known whither it is destined. Some talk of a design upon the places in the Gulf of Venice and even of the port of Malamocco'.⁵ This rumour of entering the Gulf has caused many to desert. They [Spaniards] have charged an Irish subject to raise troops for these ships. He has bound himself to find 500 men of that nation, partly here,

¹ M. Lafuente, *Historia General de España* (Barcelona, 1879), t. III, p. 273.

² A. De Rubertis, *La Congiura Spagnola contro Venezia nel 1618*, secondo i documenti di Stato di Firenze. Deputazione di Storia Patria (Firenze, 1947).

³ C. F. Duro, *op. cit.* p. 64.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 59.

⁵ The southern entrance of Venice.

partly in Rome.¹ With or without the King's consent, Osuna was now massing his ships in the southern Adriatic, and by the spring of 1617 hostilities seemed inevitable, as most of the Venetian representatives in Europe pointed out in their dispatches.² Besides strengthening Ribera's squadron, now 12 galleons strong,³ with 19 royal galleys under the command of Amiral Don Pedro de Leiva, the Viceroy had detained in his ports such foreign ships as he thought adapted to his purpose. These were two English ships, the *William and Ralph* and the *Delight*.⁴ An English adventurer, living in Naples at the time, is also mentioned by the Venetian Resident '... the four fustarelle, or long barques, will leave with the four feluccas and a smaller one under the command of a certain Captain Robert [Elliot]. It is said that they are certainly going to Brindisi. A large ship is loading biscuits and munitions for the same place.'⁵ Some time later this same Elliot was reported by the Venetians to be busy in taking soundings of the Istrian harbours and picking up prizes for himself south of Ancona.⁶

In Venice the news of Osuna's preparations caused much commotion, but above all, the threat to her sovereignty over Il Golfo di Venetia, which for centuries had been the corner stone of her commercial and military policy, called for defensive counter-measures.⁷ Unfortunately the High Lords of the Venetian Admiralty had been slow to realize that their galleys, or 'armata sottile', which until then had made up the bulk of their naval forces, were becoming obsolete, for new and much more seaworthy vessels with powerful broadside armaments were rapidly displacing the old Mediterranean fighting galley. Consequently, dockyards and harbours were hastily combed and a squadron of square-sailers, mostly old merchantmen, was put together and given in command to the patrician Lorenzo Venier with the rank of 'Capitano delle Navi Armate'.⁸ The Signoria had at first refrained from nominating a 'Capitano Generale da Mar' as was usually the case when the State was at war, and she simply appointed a 'Provveditore Generale' (commander of all naval forces) picking out for the post the nobleman Giusto Antonio Belegno, a very poor choice as later events proved.

In order to reinforce the fleet, the Venetians hastily recalled from Candia their biggest galleon, *S. Marco*, which had been chartered by one Almerigo

1 Allen B. Hinds, *Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts*. Venetia^a, 1615-17 (London, 1909), Vol. xiv, p. 426.

2 A.S.V. Sen.Sec. Dispacci di Spagna e di Napoli, maggio 1617.

3 A. Battistella, *Una Campagna Navale Veneto Spagnuola in Adriatico poco conosciuta* (1922), Archivio Veneto-Tridentino, Vol. II, p. 16.

4 Cal. S.P. *op. cit.* p. 515.

5 A.S.V. Sen.Sec. Dispacci di Napoli, 30 maggio 1617.

6 A.S.V. Sen.Sec. Dispacci d'Inghilterra, 1617.

7 A. Battistella, *op. cit.* p. 16.

8 *Ibid.* p. 21

Balbi (she was now referred to as '*il Galeone Balbi*'), besides engaging two English ships, the *Gran Tigre* and *Gran Naranzer*.¹ A third English vessel was added some time later, after the British Ambassador Wotton had recommended her to the Venetian Senate.² She only appears once in an Admiralty report from the Dalmatian coast, dated 2 January 1618, and had a complement of 45 men.³

Hostilities started in Dalmatia on 13 April 1617, when Ribera, while cruising with five galleons off the island of Lesina, fired a few shots at two Venetian galleys. In the meantime Venier had sailed from Venice with his division and, on the 22nd had joined the Commander-in-Chief Belegno, whose forces totalled now 7 vessels, 4 galleasses, 10 galleys and 15 Albanian minor boats.⁴ While sheltering at Lesina, Belegno lost his first chance of engaging the enemy and inexplicably wasted much valuable time re-organizing his crews. He succeeded only on the 26th in putting out to sea, but by that time Ribera was safely back in Brindisi.⁵ Then disagreements arose between the two Venetian captains, thus forcing the Senate to nominate a new Commander-in-Chief, the former 'Provveditore in Istria' Giacomo Zane.⁶

Military operations, both on land and at sea, can be followed through the many dispatches which the Venetian Senate sent to its diplomatic representatives in Europe. On 9 June 1617, for instance, Lionello, the Secretary in London, received the following report (the same to his colleagues in Rome, the Imperial Court, Spain, France, Savoy, Milan, Florence, Naples, The Hague, Coire and Zurich), which summed up the situation: 'On the 22nd ult. 19 galleys and 12 galleons of Naples arrived at Brindisi and they were awaiting four *fustarelle* and four feluccas under an English Captain [probably Robert Elliot] also sent from Naples. To day we learn that these ships have reached Porto Sta. Croce [Ragusa]. Our fleet is at Liesina waiting to be reinforced by the galleys of Candia, two galleasses and two armed ships from this city and a galleon to be sent shortly. Orders were given in Sicily to arm six ships for Spain, but they could not manage this. Our troops in Friuli have crossed the Lisonzo and gained some successes in which General Traumerstorf was slain.'⁷ And on the 16th: 'We hear of the arrival at Cattaro of the ten galleys of Candia. The nineteen galleys of Naples, with reinforcements are understood to

1 A. Battistella, *op. cit.* p. 21. Their original English name is not known.

2 A.S.V. Collegio Secreta. Esposizioni Principi, 2 agosto 1617.

3 A.S.V. Sen.Sec. Commissari in Armata, 1618.

4 A. Battistella, *op. cit.* p. 24.

5 *Ibid.* pp. 26-7.

6 *Ibid.* A.S.V. Sen.Sec. Reg. 109, c. 157, t. 165, t. 6, giugno 1617.

7 Cal. S.P. Venetian, 1615-1617, Vol. xiv. A.S.V. Sen.Sec. Deliberazioni, 9 giugno

1617. Traumerstorf, v.e. Trauttmansdorff Adam.

have gone to Meleda [Dalmatia] Don Pedro de Leiva and Ossuna's sons are said to have received the keys of Ragusa and to have been entertained publicly there . . .'.¹ The 10 galleys, which were called 'La Varda de Candia', were able to join the main fleet, but even with such a reinforcement Belegno lost another favourable occasion of closing in on De Leiva, who at that time seemed to have become the Senior Officer in charge. On 22 June the new Provveditore Zane took command of the fleet at Lesina. He could now count upon 16 galleons, 6 galleasses, 32 galleys and 25 minor boats, besides the big galleon *Balbi*.² But this change of officers produced little improvement, for Belegno and Zane somehow both remained practically in command and relations between the two and Venier became even more strained. Such an absurd situation explains why the Venetian fleet on 13 and 14 July failed to gain contact with De Leiva who, with a powerful body of 18 galleons, 33 galleys and 4 brigantines, was cruising off Lesina. A few days later the Spanish Admiral scored a more substantial success near Zara, and the Senate had to inform its Ambassador in Turin (and the same to the other representatives in Europe) that: 'Yesterday we received news of the capture by the Spanish fleet of two of our galleys laden with merchandise of great value';⁴ in Venice public feeling against the admirals of the fleet this time rose high and the Senate was compelled to open an inquiry against both Belegno and Zane, who were finally recalled. Lorenzo Venier was chosen as their successor (Pl. 1) and was given Francesco Morosini di Pietro as his second in command.

Hardly had Osuna's Armada returned to its moorings at Brindisi, when De Leiva, who had never been on good terms with the Viceroy,⁵ suddenly and with no warning, left the harbour with his royal galleys and the two captured from the Venetians, and sailed for Messina. Soon after, a sharp order from Madrid summoned all Spanish vessels to leave the Adriatic and proceed to Genoa, where they were to pass under the command of the Marqués de Santa Cruz.⁶

Peace negotiations in Italy had been going on for some time and perhaps this was the explanation for the sudden 'revirement' which had taken place at the court of Madrid, although religious motives may also have had their weight, the Prime Minister, the Duke of Lerna, fearing that the arrival of so many Dutch and English troops in Venice might spread the Protestant heresy throughout Italy.⁷ Peace, in fact, was signed in Paris on 6 September

1 Cal. S. P. Venetian, 1615-1617. Vol. xiv. A.S.V. Sen.Sec. Delib. 16 giugno 1617.

2 A. Battistella, *op. cit.* p. 38.

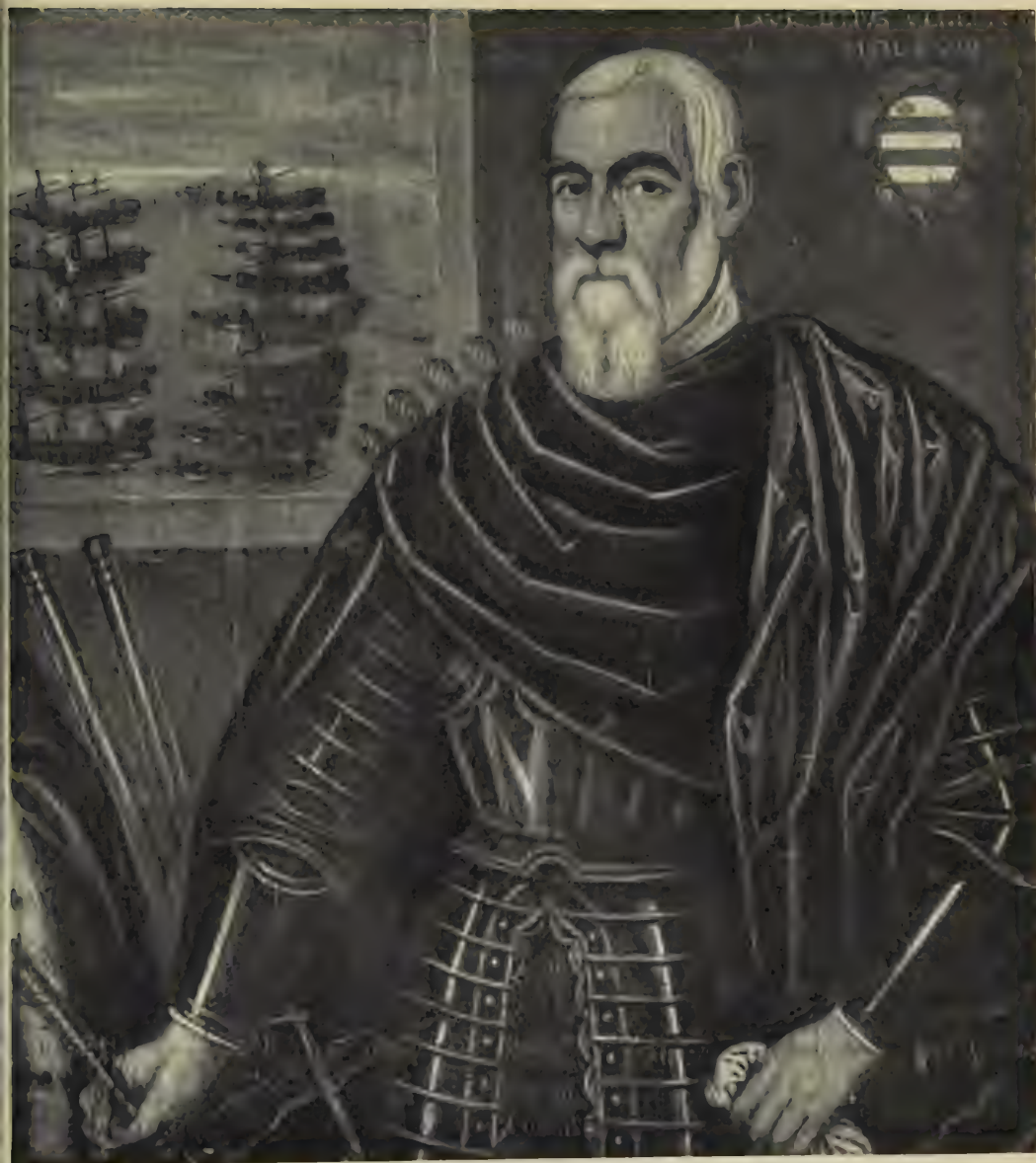
3 C. F. Duro, *op. cit.* p. 88.

4 Cal. S.P. Venetian. A.S.V. Sen.Sec. Delib. 21 luglio 1617.

5 C. F. Duro, *op. cit.*

6 *Ibid.* p. 92.

7 A. Luzio, *op. cit.* p. 26, from *Collecciones*, ecc. p. 280.



LORENZO VENIER, COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE VENETIAN FLEET
He held the rank of Provveditore Generale da Mar from July to December 1617, and
Capitano Generale da Mar from December 1618 to July 1619

(Museo Storico Navale, Venezia)



PIETRO BARBARIGO

Was appointed Capitano Generale da Mar of the Venetian Fleet from May to November 1618
(*Museo Storico Navale, Venezia*)

1617 and ratified in Madrid on the 26th. The Senate gave news of it to all its representatives, 'We have received word of the arrangements made at Paris for the general peace in Italy, with the articles drawn up on the 6th inst., which comprise the affairs both of the Republic and Savoy, his most Christian Majesty pledging his word for what touches us and for carrying out the treaty of Asti with the restitution of the places occupied, either before or after. These articles are to be ratified at the court of Spain by the Catholic King, who also has powers for the Emperor and the King of Bohemia. . . .'¹ But peace was not yet to come, and it soon became clear that the Spanish Viceroy in Italy would make trouble. By October the Senate was informing its Ambassador in Rome that: 'Don Pedro de Toledo is quartering many of his troops near our Lombard frontiers. The Viceroy of Naples, notwithstanding the treaty made in France, continues more determinedly than ever in his evil designs, and news has reached us this week that he has sent out a fleet for the purpose of entering the Gulf against us. Yet at the same time the proposals for a truce were brought to us.'² These proceedings were confirmed in other dispatches to the Ambassador Contarini in England.³

While Venier was attempting to blend together the different units which made up the Venetian fleet and kept the crews busy by shifting his ships continually from the Dalmatian to the Apulian coast, Osuna was hastening his preparations for the return of his Armada to the Adriatic. Deprived of the King's galleys, he set himself at work to reinforce his fleet with a number of foreign ships which he was hoping to obtain. Spinelli heard about it in Naples and at once informed the Signoria at Venice: 'I hear that his Excellency has sent one Alexander Rose, an English merchant, with letters of exchange for 12,000 ducats, to go to England and Amsterdam to find four or six ships for him and send them home under colour of trade in salt fish and other things; his Excellency proposes to detain them and use them against your Serenity.'⁴ The Senate immediately warned Ambassador Contarini in London and the Secretary Surian at the Hague to look out for such a person should he appear there. He did, in fact, as Contarini wrote in a report dated 10 November. '...I find that he [Rose] has been in London for some time making contracts for salted fish... He is endeavouring to charter vessels, but as the Lords of the Council have perhaps some suspicion of his projects, they do not choose to allow him to take vessels away from the island unless he gives sufficient security for their

¹ Cal. S.P. Venetian, 1617-1619, Vol. xv. A.S.V. Sen.Sec. Delib. 22 settembre 1617.

² *Ibid.* 13 ottobre.

⁴ *Ibid.* Dispacci di Napoli, 26 settembre.

³ *Ibid.* 27 ottobre.

being employed solely for commerce.¹ Thus all of Osuna's plans ended in failure.²

Under pretext of defending the Raguseans and preventing the arrival of Dutch reinforcements in the Adriatic, the Viceroy, on 13 October wrote to Philip III that he had sent Ribera with 17 galleons back to Brindisi again,³ but the King's answer this time was in the negative: '...no vengo por agora en daros la licencia que peis, hasta ver que todo se haya aquietado...'.⁴ But it was too late. Venier and Ribera were once more facing each other outside Santa Croce bay on the Dalmatian coast. The Venetian admiral, who had a much larger force,⁵ had drawn up his ships in the classic half-moon formation with galleys and galleasses in the centre and the square-sailers (some of which were Dutch and English) on his left and right wings. Ribera's squadron made up mainly of Neapolitan vessels, was on a double front line. On 19 November, the two fleets opened fire and for hours kept on hammering at each other in a futile combat. When night came contact was lost, but it was once more resumed at daybreak and when finally Venier was sure of closing in on the enemy, a number of Venetian captains, followed at once by their foreign colleagues, practically refused to carry on the attack, thus allowing Ribera to slip away.⁶ Later on, discipline having been somehow restored, Venier with part of his ships, made for the Apulian coast in the hope of once more engaging Ribera, but during the night owing to heavy sea, he was forced to transfer his flag to the galleon *Balbi*, quite an unprecedented case in the history of the Venetian navy where it had always been the tradition to have the Commander-in-Chief on board a 'galea bastarda'.⁷ Contact, however, was not achieved and the Captain-General, under close reefs, was forced to return to Curzola. During the storm five Venetian galleys were lost.

When the Senate received Venier's report, an inquiry was opened and a number of captains were reprimanded and deprived of their command.⁸ By this battle it was proved once more, how hopeless was the manoeuvre in

1 Cal. S.P. Venetian, 1617-1619, Vol. xv. A.S.V. Dispacci d'Inghilterra, 10 novembre 1617.

2 *Ibid.* Dispacci di Napoli, 13 febbraio 1618.

3 C. F. Duro, *op. cit.* p. 97. A. Battistella, *op. cit.* p. 78, says that the ships were 15. A.S.V. Provveditori Generali da Mar, report N. 9, mentions 15 enemy vessels.

4 C. F. Duro, *op. cit.* p. 99. Bibl. Nac. MS. H 16, f. 73.

5 A.S.V. Capitani in Golfo. Letter N. 1268 by Natale Donà, numbers the Venetian forces as 18 galleons, 5 galleasses, 28 galleys and 7 minor craft.

6 On the battle see also C. F. Duro, *op. cit.* p. 101, 'Relación de el Duque de Estrada'.

7 The Capitano or Provveditore Generale Da Mar's galley was bigger than the usual standard 'sensile' and was sometimes called *la Generalizia* or *la Reale*. Her sails were striped white and red and she carried three lanterns on her poop.

8 A. Battistella, *op. cit.* p. 96. Two officers, Almerigo Balbi and Girolamo Morosini di Alvise, were sent to Venice in irons.

the same naval formation of round ships together with long ships, these always lagging far behind the main body. As to the foreign ships which had been chartered, the least that can be said is that their captains and crews had no heart in this war and simply did their best to keep out of it. 'I have already told your Excellencies', wrote Francesco Molin, Commissioner with the fleet, 'how little can be hoped from the Flemish ships and how they keep saying that they do not wish to serve. From the galley at Curzola, January 14, 1617. M.V.'¹ Between February and March they were all paid off.

What had been the reactions in Spain? According to Contarini, his reports from London say that 'Letters have arrived from his Majesty's Ambassador in Spain announcing the very firm resolve of the King there and the Duke of Lerna for peace in Italy, and to propitiate your Excellencies by surrendering the galleys and their cargoes, the Court not approving the proceedings of Ossuna which were greatly blamed by every one'.² But as the Viceroy for the time being was showing no signs of disarming, the Venetian Senate, strangely enough, once more resolved to seek foreign ships and crews for its fleet. 'The operations of the Spaniards and their increasing naval preparations show how little reliance we can place in their word', wrote the Signoria to the Ambassador in England. 'Accordingly we are writing to Resident Surian in Holland to provide some ships and we direct you also to procure some six or eight in that kingdom, of those best fitted to fight completely furnished with artillery, fireworks, weapons, munitions, gunners, sailors and swordsmen, with captains of experience and discretion for each ship, to command and promise to obey whoever is appointed by the republic.'³ Contarini set himself at once to work with the intention of obtaining either vessels of the Royal Navy or East Indiamen, but he soon had to abandon the idea as may be seen from his letter to the Senate: '... I trust your Serenity will approve the reasons which deterred me from asking the king for his own ships, for again since the receipt of the last orders I chose to speak on the subject to certain persons, from whom I became aware that there was no hope of obtaining them. The ships usually afloat to guard the island are six in number: two between Dover and Calais, two others at Plymouth and the other two in Scotland. It should be difficult to induce his Majesty to remove these guard ships, four of which, moreover, are at such a distance that it would take a long while to get them here, and

¹ Cal. S.P. *op. cit.* Vol. xv. A.S.V. Sen.Sec. Commissari in Armata, gennaio 1617. Note that the Venetian year, *more veneto*, ended on March 31, therefore January 1617 should be read 1618.

² *Ibid.* Sen.Sec. Dispacci d'Inghilterra, 15 dicembre 1617.

³ *Ibid.* Sen.Sec. Delib. 14 dicembre 1617.

what matters more, their captains and crews are creditors for very considerable arrears. A few days ago they mutinied on this account and resolved to quit the ships. . . . The king has a number of other vessels in the river at Rochester, but in such a state that it would require months to get them ready, as they are without armament, in great need of repair and require the renewal of the greater part of their tackle.'¹ In another letter Contarini wrote that he had obtained 'seven most capital ships' which were:

Ship	Dragon of 500 butts with 60 men	per month ducats	1.420
„	<i>Centurion</i> „ „ „	„ „	1.420
„	<i>Annadem</i> „ „ „	„ „	1.420
„	<i>Abigail</i> 600 „ „ „	„ „	1.600
„	<i>Hercules</i> „ „ „	„ „	1.600
„	<i>Matthew</i> „ „ „	„ „	1.600
„	<i>Royal Exchange</i> of 700 butts with 80 men	„ „	1.800

They each carried an armament of between 22 and 28 guns.² Contarini planned everything with the greatest care and precision and appointed the *Royal Exchange* as acting flagship '... as the largest, and merely during the voyage will have the command of the rest so that they may sail together in good order and more safely, and I enclose the copy of the commission whereby I prescribe the course to be followed by him'.³ The squadron sailed from Gravesend on 20 April under the command of Captain Daniel Bannister. 'He will be responsible for them until he reaches the Venetian fleet', Contarini went on, 'when the appointment will cease and he will obey the Captain-General and other public representatives as provided in the contract. Meanwhile he shall, on leaving Gravesend, proceed on his voyage with his convoy and such others as he may fall in with until off Plymouth, without making any port, straight to the Gulf of Venice. Should he encounter the fleet before reaching Corfu, he shall present himself to the Captain-General or other naval commanders with letters to be given to him and henceforward he will be under their command. Should he not find the fleet, he shall go to Corfu and present himself to the Provveditore there with letters. He will receive instructions as to where the fleet may be. Given in London, April 4 1618.'⁴ These ships carried also 500 soldiers commanded by a Colonel, one Henry Payton. The convoy arrived safely at Corfu on 27 June without having had any trouble with the Spaniards on the way, but with a large number of men down with sickness. Agostino Michiel, Venetian Commissioner with the fleet, after having made an inspection of

1 Cal. S.P. *op. cit.* A.S.V. Sen.Sec. Dispacci d'Inghilterra, 2 marzo 1618.

2 *Ibid.* 13 marzo 1618.

3 *Ibid.* 4 aprile 1618.

4 *Ibid.* 4 aprile 1618.

the squadron, reported to the Senate that '...the ships do not seem to be of the importance that was expected, only one being about 500 tons, though the master declares it to be 600. The others are 450 tons with iron pieces, in sufficient numbers, but small and therefore of little use; from their condition and make they seem tolerably old. Curzola, the 11th July 1618.'¹

Unfortunately this new addition of English vessels to the Venetian Armada proved only a source of trouble and there were soon signs of dissatisfaction amongst the crews owing to differences of pay. On 14 July two hundred men deserted their ships taking refuge near Ragusa. They were at once rounded up by a landing party and forced to surrender. 'After a short trial', wrote the Captain-General Pietro Barbarigo (Pl. 2) to the Doge and Senate,² 'I picked out the most guilty among the mutineers, the lieutenant, the sergeant, two corporals and four soldiers, and had them hanged at the yardarm this morning in sight of the whole fleet.'³ Of course there was soon a strong protest made by the English Ambassador in Venice with the complaint that undue severity had been shown.⁴ However, discipline, if not confidence, had been restored in the fleet.

We come now to what is commonly known as the Bedmar plot, one of the most complicated and never fully explained intrigues of the seventeenth century which aroused so many comments throughout Europe. Briefly things went as follows. From the beginning of 1617, the Ambassador of the Serenissime in Rome had warned the Signoria that a certain Jacque Pierre, a sailor and adventurer from Normandy, well known to be a creature of the Viceroy of Naples, had come to him to seek employment in the service of Venice, with a vague promise to reveal important Spanish State secrets. Meanwhile, the Venetian Resident in Naples had managed to obtain most of Osuna's plans, 'which', he wrote in a letter addressed to the Senate, 'are so incredible, that their Lordships will be moved to laughter on hearing them'.⁵ The Viceroy was actually reckoning to bring his ships up the Adriatic and, by taking advantage of what seemed an inactive Venetian fleet, to enter St Mark's harbour by surprise, overthrow the Signoria by force and set up, with the help of a fifth column, a sort of Quisling

¹ Cal. S.P. *op. cit.* A.S.V. Commissari in Armata, cod. 392.

² Owing to Venier's health, the command of the fleet was passed over to Pietro Barbarigo, with the rank of Capitano Generale Da Mar. A.S.V. Sen.Secreta. Cons. X. 1616-1619, c. 130. He joined the fleet at the beginning of May. By such a decision evidently Venice considered herself now at war.

³ Cal. S.P. *op. cit.* A.S.V. Sen.Sec. Dispacci Capitano Gen. Da Mar, 16 luglio 1618.

⁴ *Ibid.* A.S.V. Collegio Sec. Esposizioni Principi, 30 luglio 1618.

⁵ A.S.V. Sen.Sec. Part, 25 aprile 1617. For references to the Spanish conspiracy see bibliography at the end of this article.

government favourable to Spain's interests. It was therefore decided to enlist this Frenchman, together with a number of his followers, but to keep them constantly under close watch. By this time the Council of X, which had been made cognizant of the whole case and possessed proofs of the conspiracy, thanks to the revelations made by one Baldassare Juven, a French soldier of fortune in the ranks of the Venetian army, cast wide their nets and captured most of the gang on 12 May 1618. Jacque Pierre, his companion Langland and one Rossetti, who at the time were on board a galley of the Venetian fleet, were promptly disposed of; other members of the band, who had been rounded up in Venice, were hastily suppressed in the prisons of the Ducal Palace. Only a few were able to escape to Naples and Milan.

How far the Spanish Ambassador in Venice, Don Alonzo de la Quevedo y Benavides, Marqués de Bedmar, was implicated in the plot, is a matter still open to discussion, but the fact remains that the spies had their headquarters within his very house, often in communication with that other centre of intrigue, the palace of Don Pedro Alvarez de Toledo, Spanish Governor of Milan. Innocent or guilty, soon after the collapse of the plot, Bedmar left the town in haste and while the Venetian Senate was officially requesting the Spanish Government to recall its Ambassador.¹

From London, Ambassador Contarini sent word that James had been informed by Wotton of what had happened in Venice and that 'The king had the letter read to him twice and expressed extreme surprise and disgust that any sovereign should be found capable of giving his assent to deeds so impious and detestable. . .'.² James also wrote to the newly elected Doge Antonio Priuli 'Quamprimum intelleximus quanto ex periculo Serenissimae vestra Respublica emersit, scripsimus extemplo gratulam Reip. salutem et incolumitatem suam, qua certe nihil nobis antiquius esse potuit nihil jucundius. . . Dat. e Palatio Westmonasterii, X die Junii, A.D. 1618. Jacobus R.'³

In the Adriatic the situation had become more or less stagnant, but Barbarigo was keeping his large and composite forces busy with continual cruises along the Italian coasts, exchanging at times a few shots with the Spanish forts of Bari and Brindisi. On 13 August he wrote to the Signoria that 'The twelve Dutch galleons have arrived in the channel of Curzola. The captains report that in the Strait of Gibraltar they fell in with six large Spanish bertonas and eight or ten smaller ships. The Spaniards wished to stop them, on hearing that they were going to serve your Serenity. A fight

¹ Cal. S.P. *op. cit.* Preface, Vol. xv, p. xiv. The same Wotton in Venice had not been free from suspicion owing to his intimacy with his Spanish colleague.

² *Ibid.* A.S.V. Sen.Sec. Dispacci d'Inghilterra, giugno 1618.

³ Cal. S.P. A.S.V. Collegio. Lettere Principi—Inghilterra.

took place lasting 22 hours. The Dutch say they lost 15 men and had about 25 wounded. They think that they sank one of the Spanish berton and damaged some others. . . .¹

In September information reached Barbarigo that Ribera and the Marqués de Santa Cruz were again on the move with a squadron of 18 galleons and about to enter the Gulf; but off Sicily they were caught in a severe gale and forced to seek refuge, some at Trapani and others at Palermo.² The cruise was finally called off. Although at the end of the year the Senate was writing to its Ambassador at Vienna, and the same to the other courts, that 'Ossuna in his encounters with Santa Croce the Admiral and others, expressed himself more strongly than ever against us, and continues fresh preparations of war. . .', all naval operations came to an end. At that time Venice was mourning the death of her Captain-General Pietro Barbarigo. Temporarily³ the command of the fleet passed to the Provveditore Francesco Erizzo and hence once more to Lorenzo Venier.⁴

On 26 January 1619, Ambassador Wotton came into the Senate and recommended four ships of the Royal Navy, which had been previously suggested in a memorandum presented by an English seaman, Sir Henry Mainwaring, who had also offered his services to the Republic. The Doge replied that 'there are various reports. They [Spaniards] speak of Algiers, but their preparations are directed elsewhere. The Republic is determined to resist every attempt on their part to enter the Gulf. We are sure of your good will about obtaining the ships and we thank you warmly. . .'.⁵ But nothing came of it and the matter was soon dropped as the rumour of great naval preparations in Spain had caused considerable anxiety in England and the English were now busy refitting all their available ships.⁶ It was also found out that '... the performances of Sir Mainwaring do not correspond to his proposals, and his credit here remains lower than his understanding. . .'.⁷

Meanwhile the menace to the Gulf of Venice had not abated and while the Spaniards were still threatening to push through to Trieste and land troops to support the Bohemians, Osuna had not abandoned his more ambitious plan of overthrowing the government of the Serenissima. This is revealed by a dispatch from Spinelli, dated Naples 2 July 1619.⁸ The document, which so far seems to have escaped any previous notice from the

1 Cal. S.P. A.S.V. Sen.Sec. Dispacci del Cap. Gen. da Mar.

2 A. Battistella, *op. cit.* p. 117. A.S.V. Dispacci da Napoli, N. 36.

3 Cal. S.P. *op. cit.* A.S.V. Sen.Sec. Delib., 1 dicembre 1618.

4 A.S.V. Sen.Sec. Reg. 113, c.

5 Cal. S.P. *op. cit.* A.S.V. Sen.Sec. Esposizioni Principi.

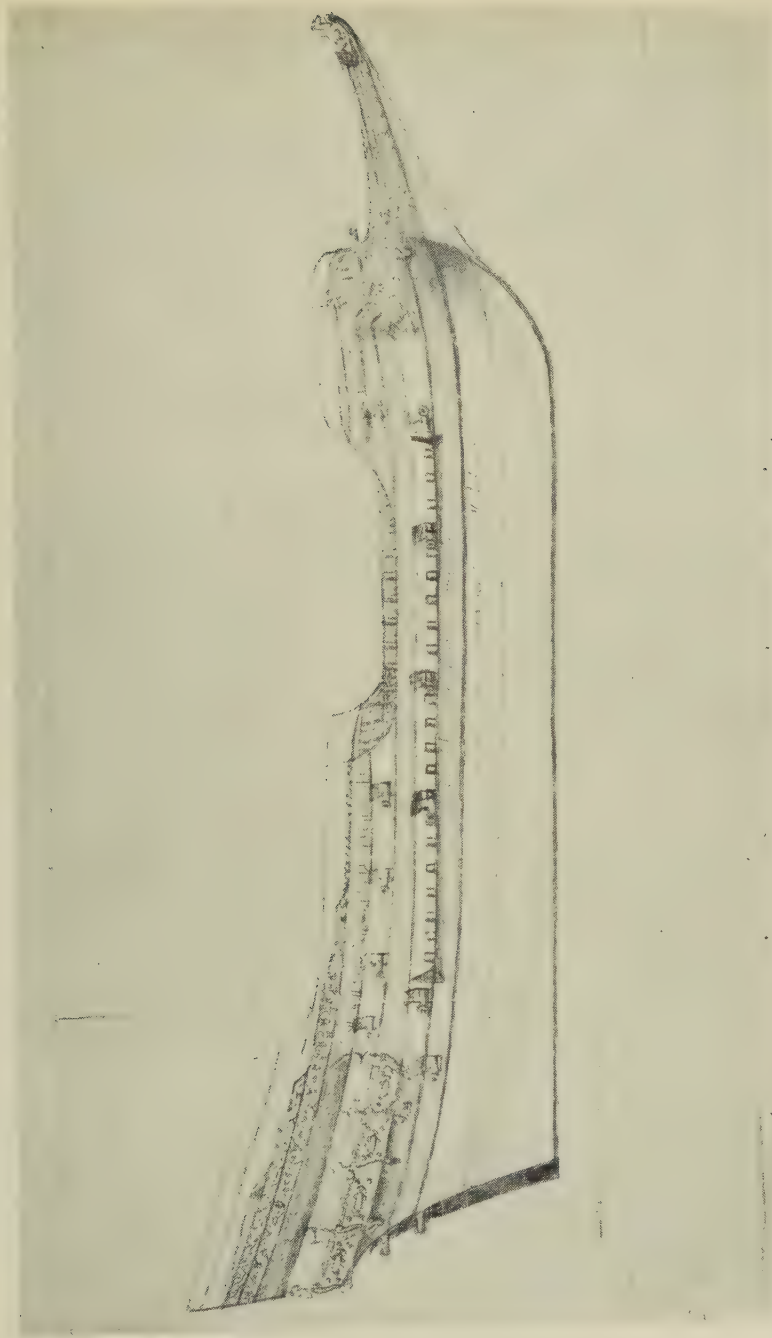
6 *Ibid.* Sen.Sec. Dispacci d'Inghilterra, 14 marzo 1619.

7 *Ibid.* Report from Antonio Donato, Venetian Ambassador in England.

8 A.S.V. Comunicazioni Consiglio dei X, busta IV, 1619.

many scholars who have worked on the 'Bedmar case', not being filed under the usual heading 'Senato Secreto. Dispacchi Residenti Esteri', but in the archives of the Council of X, is of paramount importance. While confirming the Viceroy's unfriendly disposition towards Venice, and thus disposing of the legend that the conspiracy had been invented by the Signoria, as some historians suggest,¹ it contains a set of plans of a most unusual craft. 'Somebody very close to the Duke of Ossuna and well informed about matters in Venice', the report said, 'had been summoned by His Excellency and asked to lay down the plans for the construction of a special vessel which would not draw more than ten or eleven feet, in order to cross the shallow lagoons of Venice and yet carry a heavy load of ordnance and a good number of shock troops. When the plans had been prepared and submitted to the Viceroy for his approval, he had at first expressed some doubts over the shallow draught of only eleven feet; a more detailed sketch of the stern was added therefore with further measurements included. Ossuna had then seemed pleased with the new drawings and quite openly said that he would have two such ships built right away and would then employ them in his planned attack upon Venice.' The report went on to describe how these 'Q' ships were to sail up the Adriatic, enter the Malamocco gateway (the southern entrance to Venice) flying a merchant flag and proceed to dock under oars, one of them at the Fondamenta dell'Arsenale (on the Riva degli Schiavoni) and the other to anchor in front of the island of S. Giorgio Maggiore (opposite the Piazzetta). At a given signal, timed by the striking of the bell from the campanile of St Mark at five o'clock in the morning, other members of the conspiracy, who had previously gathered in Venice coming from Trieste, Treviso and Padua, relying on surprise tactics and the support of the Spanish soldiers landed from the vessels and covered by the ships' guns, were to have occupied the Ducal Palace and the State Arsenal. Briefly it was just a repetition of what should have taken place the year before. In the same dispatch Spinelli pointed out that his man, while begging their Lordships to be constantly on the lookout, for it was the Duke's firm intention to cut to pieces the whole body of the Signoria, in handing over these papers, was asking for no reward whatsoever, but only the benign protection of the Serenissime Republic. The Resident concluded his report by adding that for the moment he could not reveal the name of the person nor gauge to what extent these revelations were worthy of belief, 'but', he wrote 'as long as the Duke of Ossuna was Viceroy of Naples, anything might be expected from one whose only thought was to effect the downfall of the Venetian State by vile deceit and base treachery'.

1 Ranke, Daru, Luzio, etc.



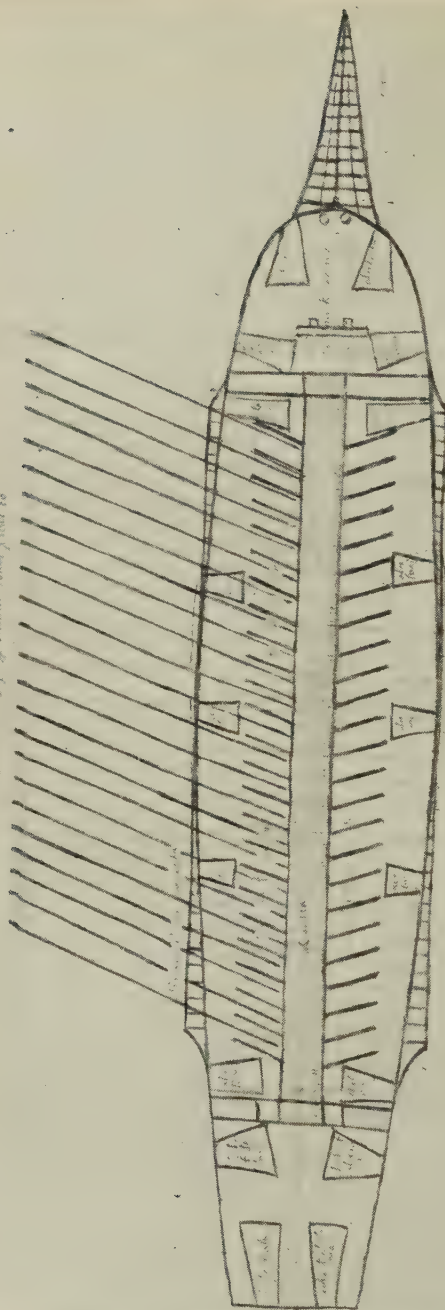
SHEER PLAN OF THE 'Q' SHIP WHICH WAS PRESENTED TO THE VICEROY OF NAPLES

Note the horseshaped figure-head

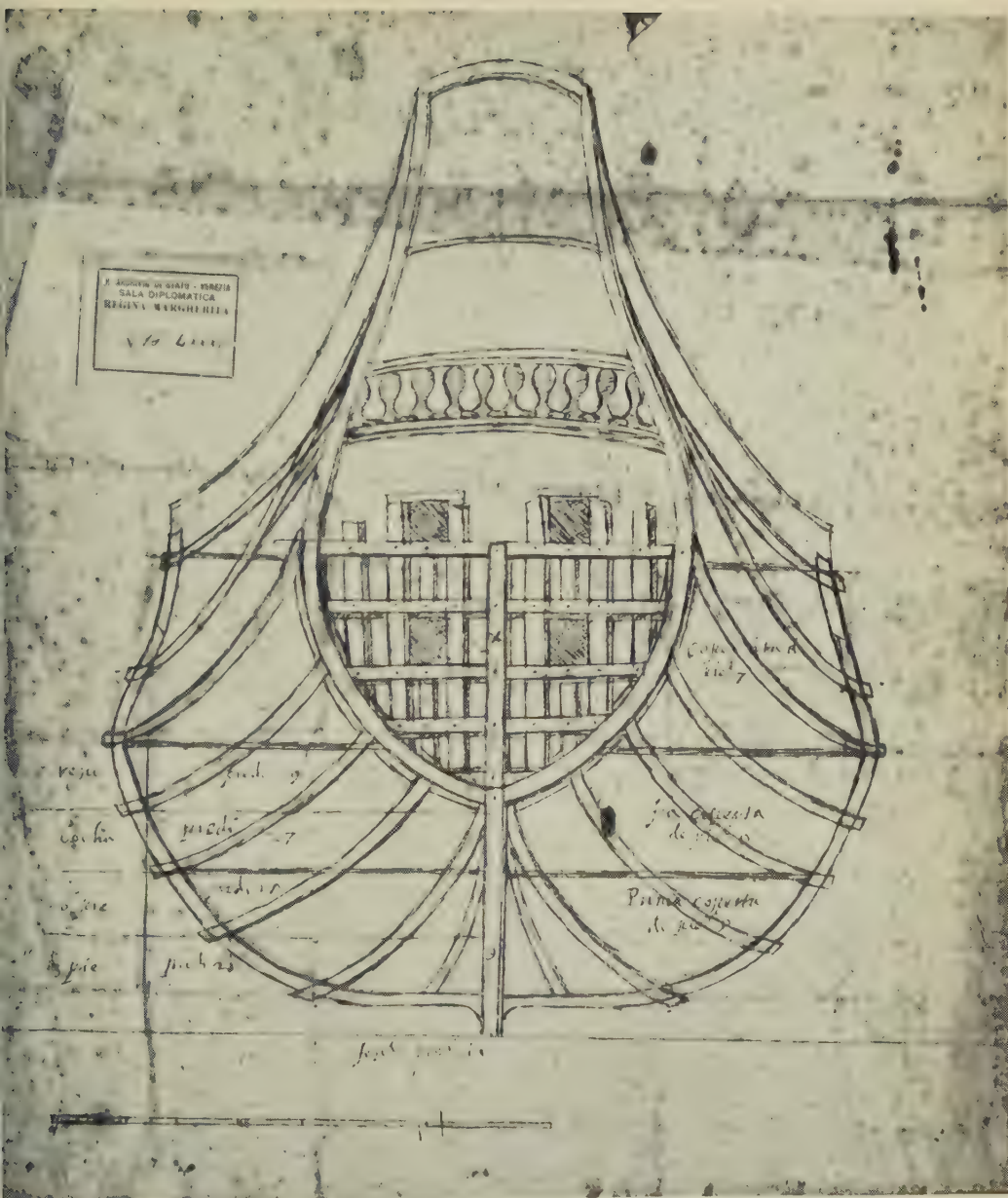
(*Archivio di Stato, Venezia*)

2nd Edition

Room no 29 of the 1st gun deck



DECK PLAN OF THE 'Q' SHIP SHOWING THE CLOSE RESEMBLANCE TO A BATTLESHIP



STERN VIEW OF THE 'Q' SHIP

(Archivio di Stato, Venezia)



VIEW OF THE 'Q' SHIP UNDER SAIL WITH OARS STEEVED UPWARDS

The question now arises: Who was the man that handed over the documents to Spinelli? Although further researches have failed to reveal the name, it is known that one Bernardino Drusi, a Venetian of doubtful reputation, was in Naples at the time, actively employed at first by the Viceroy and later by Spinelli.¹ But if so, it is highly improbable that such a wretched spy could have had sufficient knowledge of seamanship and naval architecture to conceive and lay down the plans of a ship, and it must therefore be assumed that there was another man besides him, most probably a Venetian, for all the inscriptions are in Venetian dialect, well learned in the secrets of the master shipbuilders of the State Arsenal and who, for unknown reasons, had left his city and sought work within the Viceregal province.

Following the request of the Duke of Osuna, our anonymous master shipwright must have been confronted with the problem of laying down the design of a shallow draught stout ribbed ship, bearing a true resemblance to a harmless trading vessel. He therefore devised a compromise in the hope of combining the advantages of the big sailing merchantmen of the north with the fast Mediterranean galley. The result was this hybrid ship, neither galleon nor galleass, which he submitted to his Spanish Lord and is herein-after described. It must be noted that something very similar, the 'Galion che voga a remi', that is the oared galleon, was being built in Venice back in the sixteenth century² and it is probable that such was more or less the craft which our man had in mind when he began to lay down his ship. A look at the sheer-plan (Pl. 3) will reveal a normal seventeenth-century galleon with high overhanging stern, a round bow with a square bulkhead over it (a feature probably inherited from galley tradition) and finished off with a tremendous beak. Seven guns are seen spaced at intervals on the main deck and five more of a minor calibre, on the upper deck. Elaborate gilded decorations cover the quarter-galleries and extend along the trail-board abaft the figure-head. A point of interest in the ship is this figure-head shaped like a galloping horse, having a particular significance in this case. A very popular heraldic symbol within the town of Naples, it showed on the coat-of-arms of two out of the six boroughs or 'sedili' in which the town was administratively divided (*Capoana* and *Nilo*). Osuna, possibly in search of popularity, started the provocation by decorating the taffrail of a brigantine, which he used as his own yacht, with a silver horse dashing over the body of a Venetian senator. Spinelli fully described the incident in one of his weekly dispatches to his government, adding that the event

1 S. Romanin, *Storia Documentata di Venezia* (Venezia, 1835), Vol. vii, p. 133.

2 F. C. Lane, *Venetian Naval Architecture about 1550*, in *M.M.* (1934), Vol. xx.

deeply impressed the Neapolitan populace.¹ Sometime later the Venetians replied by using the same scheme for the decoration of one of their galleys. The diplomatic representatives of Mantua² and Florence in Venice, both describe the event in letters to their governments. 'This evening', wrote Ambassador Battaino of Mantua, 'the Captain-General Venier hoisted his flag on his ship and sailed from the Lido whence he will proceed to join the main fleet. Upon the poop of his galley, which is gaudily decorated and of unusual proportions, there is a carving of a white horse flanked by two lions which hold him by the bridle and beat him with a whip; and above the motto *Furoris Domitor*, an allusion many think, to the horse of Naples and to the Duke of Ossuna, who is here believed to be mad.'³

Dimensions, which slightly differ in each drawing, on Pl. 3 are as follows: length overall, 137 ft. 8 in., length on water line, 126 ft. 4 in., length on keel, 108 ft. 7 in.⁴

On the deck plan (Pl. 4) the Mediterranean influence is even more evident, and in this respect the ship unmistakably resembles a galleass. The benches are arranged on each side of the central gangway and slanted obliquely towards the poop, while the outrigger frame, which is clearly visible and projects beyond the sides, at the points where the hull narrows fore and aft, enables the rowers to gain sufficient leverage and to allow them to use oars of equal length. Unfortunately, details are here scarce and there is no trace, for instance, of those low footstools on which the rowers mounted before falling back on their heavy oars. These oars were 30 ft. long (20 ft. outboard and 10 ft. inboard) and must have been handled by at least three men each (judging by the length of the benches) from a total of 144 galleotes. On this plan the overall length appears to be 127 ft. 6 in. and the main breadth 29 ft. 7 in.

Pl. 5 shows a square tuck stern at the water-line which then narrows upwards, following a Dutch fashion. All decorations are here omitted except for one balcony row in order to reveal the reinforced construction. Traverse bulkheads were to have been fitted so as to withstand the effects of enemy gunfire, and this is probably the meaning of the inscription which reads 'fatta a cassoni'.

From the design of the midship section it appears that methods and technique employed were still those carried out by Venetian master shipbuilders centuries earlier,⁵ the midship frame being constructed by dividing

1 A.S.V. Sen.Sec. Dispacci da Napoli, 8 agosto 1617.

2 A. Luzio, *op. cit.* p. 138. Dispacci Ambasciatori Mantovani a Venezia.

3 A. De Rubertis, *op. cit.*

4 Measurements have been converted from Venetian to English feet. 1 Ven. ft. = 1.1 Engl. ft.

5 F. C. Lane, *Venetian Ships and Shipbuilders of the Renaissance* (The Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore, 1934).

the space between the deck and the water-line into equal parts, which were called the 'regia' (main beam), the 'bocha', the 'sie pie', the 'tre pie' and the 'fonda'. The design of the actual curve was probably obtained by the geometric device of the 'meza luna'.¹

The rigging and the sail plan (Pl. 6), although roughly sketched on the reverse of drawing no. 5, is noteworthy because it shows the usual orthodox galleon rig (and not the galleass rig) with square sails on the fore and main mast and lateen on the mizzen. Incidentally it should be noted that the Venetian galleasses carried lateen sails on all three masts, while in the eighteenth century a jib was also added. The mainmast is stepped as it should be, abaft the middle of the gundeck, with a slight rake aft, while the mizzen seems to be one-third from the taffrail. The foremast alone is not shown as close to the stemhead as in many other seventeenth-century models, but of course this and other details may have been overlooked in such a summary sketch. The bowsprit seems to be of the standard type, rising at a normal angle, although there is no indication whether it was steeved in the centre or on the side. The spritsail topmast, however, is stepped somewhat aft on the bowsprit, an unusual modification at that period, for it is known that in the early years of that century, it was the custom to have it right out at the very tip of the bowsprit. The sketch shows our ship sailing majestically on the high seas with her oars (the number is here changed again and reduced to 14) steeved well upwards as was the practice when running under sail alone.

Meanwhile, in Europe the Thirty Years War was flaring up and the Spanish Court with other and more urgent problems to solve than minor wars in Italy, was now determined to come to a settlement with Venice. On her side the Signoria was only too willing to see peace restored in the Adriatic and at the same time to rid herself of such a huge and expensive fleet which had now become practically useless. So the Captain-General was told to pay off all the foreign ships under his command² and the Provveditore at Zara to see that Colonel Peyton and his men be brought to Venice where they were to receive their wages for their voyage home.³

About the same time strange rumours were coming from Naples where Spinelli was writing that the Viceroy had bragged quite openly about establishing an independent kingdom in that province.⁴ The same news was being reported by the Ambassador of Savoy in London.⁵ The possibility of

¹ Bartolomeo Crescentio, *Nautica Mediterranea* (Roma, 1602).

² Cal. S.P. *op. cit.* A.S.V. Sen.Sec. Delib. al Capitano Generale da Mar, 25 giugno 1619.

³ *Ibid.* 20 luglio 1619.

⁴ A.S.V. Comunicazioni Consiglio X, busta 1v.

⁵ Cal. S.P. A.S.V. Sen.Sec. Dispacci d'Inghilterra, giugno 1619.

such an event must have caused serious embarrassments to the authorities in Madrid, who then decided to forestall these aspirations with tact and diplomacy.¹ Orders were therefore given to the Spanish Ambassador in Rome, Cardinal Gaspare Borgia, to proceed to Naples and once there to take possession *ad interim* of the town in the name of the King of Spain.² On 23 May 1620, as dawn was breaking, Cardinal Borgia, after first winning over to his side Don Alvaro and Don Antonio de Mendoza, captains of Castel Nuovo and Castel Santelmo, entered the city. Osuna accepted his fate and quietly handed over to his successor the Governorship of the State. A few days later, while the forts of the town were giving him a 21-gun salute and escorted by his own galleys, Don Pedro sailed from Naples.³

In London when James heard the news, which had been brought to him by the newly appointed Venetian Ambassador, Girolamo Lando, he exclaimed: '... He has at last left Naples. The devil put him there. Don Pedro of Toledo at Milan and that man at Naples were placed in Italy, two hot heads, to turn that province and half the world upside down. But Cardinal Borgia is known to be prudent and very discreet, so I hope he will afford equivalent consolation.'⁴ Osuna did not go straight to Spain, but stopped some time at Marseilles and was reported in Barcelona only on 3 September. Pietro Contarini, Venetian Ambassador in Madrid, says that Philip III received him at the Escorial with much kindness and it was reported that he was about to receive a new post in Italy.⁵ The death of the King which occurred suddenly on 31 March 1621, was to prove fatal to him, for he was immediately arrested by Philip IV's new Prime Minister Olivarez on a charge of felony and, after what seems to have been a very questionable trial, was imprisoned in the Castle of Almeda. Transferred some time later to a prison in Madrid, he died on 24 September 1624.⁶

And thus passed into oblivion Don Pedro Téllez Giron y Guzman 'tercer Duque de Osuna, apellidado El Grande' and all his dreams of conquests and intrigues. Of the two 'Q' ships, which were to bring death and destruction to Venice and which might have changed the course of history, it can safely be assumed that they never took shape. They remain, however, an interesting example of early seventeenth-century Venetian naval architecture.

1 M. Schipa, *La pretesa fellonia del Duca d'Ossuna. 1619-1620*, in Arch. Stor. per le Provincie Napoletane, xxxv-xxxvi.

2 A.S.V. Sen.Sec. Dispacci di Spagna, busta 52. No. 87.

3 A.S.V. Sen.Sec. Dispacci di Spagna, busta 52. No. 94.

4 Cal. S.P. *op. cit.* vol. xvi. A.S.V. Sen.Sec. Dispacci d'Inghilterra, 23 giugno 1620.

5 A.S.V. Sen.Sec. Dispacci di Spagna, busta 52. No. 113.

6 C. F. Duro, *op. cit.* p. 168.

Abbreviations used

A.S.V.	Archivio di Stato di Venezia
Cal. S.P.	Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts
M.V.	More Veneto
Sen.Sec.	Senato Secreta
N.A.V.	Nuovo Archivio Veneto, a cura della Deputazione di Storia Patria per le Venezie.

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APPENDIX

DISPATCH FROM RESIDENT SPINELLI TO THE SENATE AND DOGE

[Archivio di Stato di Venezia. Comunicazioni Consiglio dei X. Busta IV. 1619.]

Ser.mo Principe.

Persona che per le pratiche con de più intimi famigliari del S.mo Vicerè, et che professava obbligata devozione verso la Ser. tà Vta., et mostra desiderio del suo servitio, trovandosi meco me ha in grandissima confidenza detto.

Che continuando pure il Duca di Ossuna ne suoi pensieri di minare Venetia, chiamò soggetto, che pratica di quella città, et le ricercò un modello di vascello buono, ma che pescasse al più diece in undici piedi per poter passare il luogo detto la fuosa di Venetia, et che questo vascello potesse portare buona artiglieria, et quantità di gente; mi dice, che quel soggetto fece il modello di un galeone, che può avogare ventidue remi per banda con la fracoperta fatta a cassoni per resistere all'artellaria; nel qual vascello si potrà imbarcare buon numero di fantaria; et che carico haverebbe potuto passare sopra la fuosa. Vide Sua Ecc. a il modello, et le piacque, ma le disse di dubitare, che haverebbe pescato più degli undici piedi, et quel tal soggetto fece un altro disegno della poppa, dal quale si può comprendere quanto può pescare il vascello. Dice che il pensiero di Sua Ecc. a era di farne due; farli comparer all'improvviso in vista delli Castelli di Venetia, come vascelli di mercantia, poichè li soldati starebbero sotto coperta nascosti; che poi di notte entrassero dentro, accostandosi l'uno al Castel Novo, et l'altro al Castel Vecchio; et se ben'anco si accorgesse dell' stratagemma, non se li poteva far molto danno con l'artell. a perchè la palla per la positura sua darebbe nella fracoperta accomodata con li cassoni; che disegnavano di sbarcare qualche numero di soldati per attaccare alcuno di detti Castelli, se havessero potuto. Che li due vascelli avogando se ne venissero a drittura; l'uno a sbarcare all'fondamenta dell'Arsenale, per acquistare all'improvviso la porta, et l'altro vascello sarebbe andato a S. Giorgio Maggiore; et questo haverebbe con le artellarie battuto il palazzo e la piazza di S. Marco. Che in S. Giorgio vi dovevano concorrer li congiurati con li loro contrassegni; sì che per questo effetto è stato in Venetia un tal soggetto vestito in abito di frate di S. Giorgio intendente delle cose militari et vi s'è trattenuto molti giorni, che ha riconosciuti li posti et tutto. Che in tre luoghi si doveva far tumulto, et combattere; alla Piazza di S. Marco, all'Arsenale et alli Castelli per mettere tanto maggior confusione. Che si doveano concertar li soccorsi, et starebbero parecchiati in Trieste, in Padova et a Treviso, dove si trattenirebbero molti dei congiurati per non star tutti in Venezia, sì come l'Armata Regia si sarebbe trattenuta in Golfo per venirsene al soccorso.

Mi dice questo soggetto haver con buona maniera, et con non poco suo interesse cavato di mano da quel tal soggetto la copia del modello del Galione così della parte di fuori, come di dentro, et anco della puppa, dalla quale si può comprender quanto potesse pescare, et che li dava a me p. mandarli a V. Serenità come faccio con queste.

Mi ha detto di più che in gratia in Venetia si stia avvertiti, perchè il principal pensiero è di tagliare a pezzi se potessero l'Ecc.mo Pregadi; dicendo che in quel Consiglio vi sono tutti li Senatori e dell'Ecc.mo Cons. di X e dell'Ecc.mo Collegio et in soma tutti quelli del Governo; sa essersi trattato di haver per segno di assaltare la piazza il suono della campana, che si suona la sera a S. Marco ad un'hora e meza di notte; che col suono di detta campana dovevano regolarsi li congiurati; per trovarsi pronti alli posti a fare le fattioni. Mi aggiunse di più che perciò sarebbe bene introdurre qualche capo per sestier, il quale nel tempo, che si trovava l'Ecc.mo Pregadi ridotto, andasse caminando per il suo sestiero, per osservar quello che si andasse facendo; et se vedesse moto alcuno, potesse oviare alle radunanze et alli principii; che di più mentre sta pur ridotto l'Ecc.mo Pregadi le barche de gli Ecc.mi S.ri capi non stassero ferme, ma andassero a torno per osservare le cose; che queste diligenze sono necessarie per ripararsi dalle insidie altrui, le quali si hanno certo quì in animo di effettuare questa vernata; havendo detto Ossuna di voler farne il tentativo, se ben non fusse più Vicerè, et esser questo secondo negozio rivelatomi dal sudeto sogeto di tagliare a pezzi l'Ecc.mo Senato molto ben crivellato, et consultato quì quando bene

non si conseguisse altro, che far strage di Senatori, o di quel maggior numero che si potesse da suoi sicari, che farà venir in Venetia per questo effetto: Questo è quanto ha voluto per hora comunicarmi per segno della sua devotione, per la quale pretende di meritare non ricognitioni di denari, o di alcun altra imaginabile cosa, che la sola benigna protettione della Ser. tà V. ra. Io l'ho ringraziato della communicatione, et l'ho inanimato a dirmi quel di più, che sapesse con ogni altro particolare delli nomi, tempi, luoghi, et dove ha saputo le cose sudette, sicuro che sarà posto il tutto in quella consideratione, che si conviene, et che la gratia publica non viene mai negata ad alcuno, che in qualche maniera se la va meritando. Mi rispose: Io ho fatto assai a dir quello che ho detto, stando in Napoli, del tempo e luogo ho toccato quanto si conviene; et prego quei Sig. Ecc. mi a metter in consideratione et haver mira a questo secondo negotio del Pregadi, perchè l'ho saputo da buona parte, et da persone che forse le hanno maneggiate sin hora; ma non devo passare più inanti per li miei pericoli. Ne potei havere altro da lui, se non che vedo, che egli fà molto caso di questa insidia all'Ecc. mo Senato; havendomi accennato, che si habbia quì li nomi di quasi tutti li Senatori, nota delle habitationi loro, et dove stano, et la strada che fanno nell'andar a casa quando vengono di Pregadi se per terra, o per barca, et pare che questa sia, come una prescrizione, la quale con molti sicarii si possa eseguire in gran parte, et all'improvviso, me l'ha accennata, ma mi ha pregato a no scrivere per hora questi ultimi particolari. Rappresento il tutto riverentem. te alla Ser. tà V. ra, alla quale non saprei dire quanta fede se le possa prestare in negotio di tanta importanza; so bene che di quelli, che stanno nella casa dell'Amb. re della Cueva, et che possono sapere alcuna cosa di questi trattati, si sono confidati assai, del sudetto soggetto, havendoseli egli fatti amici artificiosamente, come egli dice con donarli denari et altro; et so da più parti che Lorenzo Holo prè. de saper cose grandi in questi propositi; potrebbero essere essere anco inventioni; ma non sono materie da sprezzarsi, mentre massime starà quì il Duca di Ossuna, il quale non pensa mai ad altro, et a tradimenti, et insidie particolarmente contra la Ser. ma Rep. ca. Grat.

Da Napoli a 2 di luglio 1619.

LORD NELSON AND THE LOSS OF HIS ARM

By Captain H. T. A. Bosanquet, R.N.

IT is rather curious that in all the many biographies of the great Admiral only one, recently published, mentions the name of the surgeon of H.M.S. *Theseus*, when Nelson suffered the loss of his right arm at Santa Cruz on 25 July 1797.

In consequence, credit for the operation has been given, without any apparent justification to-day, to two or three individuals. It will be the purpose of this article to consider their claims and to show, definitely, to whom the honour is due.

The omission referred to is the more perplexing when it is realized that this untoward event was a crisis of such importance in the Admiral's life that it might have terminated his active service in the Royal Navy. For the disastrous reverse at Santa Cruz was not only a violent check to his hitherto successful career and a severe shock to his pride and self-confidence, but his wound, resulting in subsequent months of suffering, was a shattering blow to the physical system of a naturally delicate subject, grievously weakened by past illnesses, who had only recently experienced the loss of sight in one eye.

These grave disabilities would, certainly, have sufficed to cause the ordinary mortal, lacking his passionate ardour and overpowering ambition, to abandon further pursuit of honour and glory. That it did not divert him from his high purpose, and was only a passing adverse incident in his brilliant career, does not lessen its significance at the time that it occurred, nor take away from the consideration due to that other individual responsible for the work of repairing the damage as far as was possible, so that the patient could make a fresh start.

It is surprising, therefore, that contemporary historians have so lightly sketched in the details of what then occurred, which will now be briefly recalled.

In July 1797, when Lord St Vincent, C.-in-C. Mediterranean, was blockading Cadiz, he learnt of the arrival, from Manila, of a rich Spanish galleon at Santa Cruz, Tenerife, and he determined upon her capture.

For this purpose he entrusted an expedition to Rear-Admiral Sir Horatio Nelson, in the *Theseus*, in command of a squadron of eight vessels.

Note. The numbers in brackets in the text refer to the paragraphs in the Appendices.

Until May 1797, Nelson's flagship was the *Captain*, but she had been so severely mauled on St Valentine's Day at the battle of St Vincent, that he shifted his flag to the *Theseus*, 74, taking a number of the officers of the *Captain* with him, including his flag-captain, Ralph Willett Miller, and two medical officers in whom, no doubt, he had great confidence as to their professional abilities[1]. The squadron parted company with the C.-in-C. on 15 July and on the 20th arrived off Tenerife. On the evening of the 24th Nelson anchored his squadron off the town of Santa Cruz, and about 10.30 or 11.0 p.m. the landing parties of seamen and marines left their ships, Nelson himself in command, accompanied by his son-in-law Josiah Nisbet. As his boat grounded on the mole and Nelson was in the act of stepping out of it with his drawn sword in his right hand, he received a musket ball in the right arm, which shattered the limb, necessitating his speedy return to the ship, on board which he arrived about 3.30 a.m. [2] on the 25th, when his arm was immediately amputated.

The medical officers then on board the *Theseus* [1] were Thomas Eshelby, the surgeon, and Louis Remonier, surgeon's mate, being those who had been transferred from the *Captain* on the same day as the Admiral. Remonier was a French royalist refugee from Toulon hospital, who had been allowed to join the Royal Navy by Lord Hood and to serve in his professional capacity.

A second surgeon's mate, George Henderson, was not present, he having left the ship with the landing party, not to return, as he was one of the large number drowned in the attack.

The early biographers in recording this important event in the Admiral's career deal with it so superficially and ambiguously that doubt at once arises as to which of the two surgeons actually performed the operation, though the natural presumption would be that it was Dr Eshelby, the surgeon. Mr Harrison, in his account (1806) [3(b)] stated, 'The Rear-Admiral, on getting aboard the *Theseus* immediately suffered the amputation of his arm; but, some mistake having occurred, in taking up one of the arteries, which is described as having been united with a nerve, by an ingenious French surgeon, he long felt the most excruciating tortures.'

Robert Southey [3(a)] gives, 'His sufferings from the lost limb were long and painful. A nerve had been taken up in one of the ligatures at the time of the operation; and the ligature according to the practice of the French surgeons was of silk instead of waxed thread.'

These extracts give the idea that it was the French surgeon who operated and that Nelson's sufferings were due to the French method of dealing with the tying of the arteries, which had not been satisfactory. Possibly on this account no mention of any names connected with the operation is made in

subsequent biographies until that of *Nelson* by Carola Oman, published in 1947, who, though mentioning that Dr Eshelby [3(c)] was the surgeon of the *Theseus* and accompanied the Admiral back to England in the *Seahorse*, also suggests that the French surgeon's mate was the operator [3(d)]. This idea has, however, quite recently, been shown to be erroneous. For, Miss Oman has brought to light in a publication of the Navy Records Society, entitled *The Keith Papers*, Vol. II, a letter from Lord Nelson to Lord Keith, then C.-in-C. Mediterranean, of 6 April 1800, requesting the promotion of 'Mr Louis Remonier [4], Surgeon of the *Speedy*, who assisted in cutting off my arm'. This leaves Dr Eshelby the only possible candidate in the field, but before definitely establishing his position the claims of another naval surgeon must first be considered.

Miss Oman quite recently received a protest from a descendant, now in Alexandria, of the late Surgeon Auchmuty, R.N., who, it appears, in his lifetime, had the reputation of having amputated Lord Nelson's arm, whereas in her book she had given the honour to another. In support of his assertion the protester sent a copy of a notice in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of 1845, as follows:

Obituary, Feb. 6

At Kilmore, Roscommon, Surgeon Auchmuty, who amputated Lord Nelson's arm at Santa Cruz. He received a gold medal from the distinguished naval hero.

In addition, as more concrete evidence, he called attention to a relic exhibited in the Museum of the Royal United Service Institution, Whitehall, as under:

Item 7139. A small operating saw, with legend attached. 'Saw with which Dr Auchmuty amputated Lord Nelson's arm in 1797. The saw was given to Field-Marshal Lord Wolseley in Dublin, in 1893, by Mr Thomas Dillon, godson of Dr Auchmuty. Given by the late Dowager Viscountess Wolseley (d. 1930).'

Now it is a matter of impossibility for a Museum on receiving gifts of this nature to inquire very closely into their past history in order to establish their authenticity. The saw was no doubt accepted without question on the good faith of its distinguished donor. Since when it has been gazed upon with interest, thrills, and shudders by a host of visitors to the Museum and, more particularly, by worshippers at the Nelson shrine.

Alas, for family tradition, the *bona fides* of Dr Auchmuty's devoted godson, and the authority of the *Gentleman's Magazine*. Enquiry into the surgeon's naval career does not sustain, in any particular, his title to the honour claimed for him.

In order to discover Dr Auchmuty's connexion with Admiral Nelson and Santa Cruz it was first of all necessary to make sure of his identity, and enquiries at the Royal College of Surgeons revealed that Arthur Ahmuty

(or Akmuty) [5] passed his examination for surgeon's 3rd mate, on 7 February 1793, and for surgeon of a 3rd-rate man-of-war, on 6 October 1796. He was the only individual of that name in their books for the period 1780-1810. Two weeks after passing he was appointed by the Admiralty to H.M.S. *Firm* as surgeon [6], remaining in her until 22 July 1797. He was then recorded in their books as discharged on his appointment as surgeon to the *Harpy* [7], brig-sloop, 18, dated 23 July 1797, which ship he joined at Sheerness the same day. The *Harpy*, then moored in the river [8], sailed in the afternoon for the Downs where she arrived and moored on the afternoon of the 24th, remaining there until 27 July 1797.

The foregoing makes it perfectly clear that on 24 and 25 July 1797, Surgeon Ahmuty was on board H.M.S. *Harpy*, off Sheerness and in the Downs and was not at Santa Cruz. On that account he can be considered definitely out of the picture.

Returning to Dr Thomas Eshelby [9]; unknown to Miss Oman when she published her biography of Lord Nelson in 1947, a distinguished Harley Street surgeon had, in 1933, published a small volume entitled *Idols and Invalids*, containing short chapters on the medical histories of a number of distinguished, and some notorious, individuals in history who had abnormal medical lives, the work dealing with such characters as Louis XV, Byron, Cleopatra, Henry VIII and Lord Nelson.

In the notice of Lord Nelson in connexion with the Santa Cruz affair, the author, Mr James Kemble, has gone to the fountain-head and quotes extensively from the medical journal of H.M.S. *Theseus* [10] (May 1797-May 1798), now in the Public Record Office, and kept by Dr Eshelby. This gives in detail the whole story from the time Admiral Nelson arrived on board, examination of the arm, and subsequent amputation, with the medicines given to the patient after all was completed. The journal gives entries for the first few days after which they cease, probably because there was little change to record. On 19 August the Admiral was transferred to H.M.S. *Seahorse* for the passage home, Dr Eshelby accompanying him and continuing his medical journal in the *Seahorse* [11]. From what has been shown in the foregoing pages, and the evidence given by the medical journal of the *Theseus*, it is quite clear that Dr Thomas Eshelby was the operating surgeon on Admiral Nelson's arm and to him alone belongs the honour. Notwithstanding the unfortunate after-effects of the operation, owing to the ligatures failing to come away normally, the arm ultimately healed up completely and it would thus seem that the operation, according to contemporary ideas and knowledge, was skilfully performed. Lord Nelson himself expressed the opinion that he had 'a good surgeon'.

Looking back down the years, it is certainly very astonishing why there should ever have been any doubt in the matter, and even more surprising why credit should have been given to Dr Auchmuty, who was distant some 1700 miles from the scene of the operation at the time it took place.

It will be well here to add a brief tribute to Mr Kemble's really valuable, most interesting and informative book. Future biographers of Lord Nelson, after a study of his medical life, as is here so clearly and simply described by a professional surgeon, will be in a good position to understand and to deal sympathetically with his paradoxical character.

The attached Appendices give the authorities for the statements made in this article. For the extracts made from the Examiners Book of the Royal College of Surgeons I am greatly indebted to Mr W. R. LeFanu, the Librarian of the College Library, for his courtesy and assistance.

Appendices [12], [13] and [14], though not mentioned in the text, are relevant to the narrative.

[1]

APPENDICES

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE

1797. Ad. 36/12648

Muster-Table of His Majesty's Ship the *Theseus*

No. in Muster List	Date of Appt.	Date of Joining	Name	Rank	Date of Discharge	Cause of discharge and to what ship
	27. 5. 97	27. 5. 97	Horatio Nelson	R.A.	19. 8. 97	To <i>Seahorse</i> .
941	7. 2. 97	7. 2. 97	John Aylmer	Capt.	26. 5. 97	Superseded.
979	27. 5. 97	27. 5. 97	R. Willett Miller	"		Still in comd. 1798
817	18. 5. 96	—	John Snipe	Surgn	24. 2. 97	Superseded.
944	—	25. 2. 97	James Farquhar	"	26. 5. 97	"
	By warrant					
1020	27. 5. 97	27. 5. 97	Thomas Eshelby	"	18. 8. 97	To <i>Seahorse</i> .
911	15. 1. 97		Sampson Hardy	Surgn's 1st Mate	26. 5. 97	To H.M.S. <i>Captain</i>
1005	27. 5. 97	27. 5. 97	{ Louis Remonier age 24 From <i>Captain</i> , Toulon	"	—	Still serving 1. 4. 98.
1034	By warrant 18. 8. 97		Robert Tainsh From <i>Emerald</i>	Surgn	—	"
960	By warrant 16. 3. 97	16. 3. 97	{ George Henderson age 19 From Alloa, Scotland.	Surgn's 3rd Mate	25. 7. 97	D.D. Drowned in storming Santa Cruz.

Note. Rear-Admiral Nelson, Dr Eshelby, Louis Remonier, and Captain Willett Miller all joined the *Theseus* on the same day, 27 May from the *Captain*. 25 July 1797.

On the night of the attack on Santa Cruz the medical officers on board the *Theseus* were:

Thomas Eshelby, Surgeon.

Louis Remonier, Surgeon's 1st Mate.

With the Landing Party:

George Henderson, Surgeon's 3rd Mate. Drowned during the attack.

[2]

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE

Captain's Journal of the Proceedings on board H.M.S. *Theseus*
From 27th May, 1797 to 26th May, 1798

Tuesday, July 25th, 1797.

At $\frac{1}{2}$ past 10 P.M.¹ the seamen and Marines left the ship under the command of Rear-Admiral Nelson—at $\frac{1}{2}$ past 2 A.M. began a heavy cannonading in the town—at $\frac{1}{2}$ past 3 Admiral Nelson returned on board (being wounded in his right arm which occasioned it to be cut off). At 4 several of the boats returned on board their respective ships, the Fox cutter having received a 24 pound shot in her magazine and sunk her—several of the boats employed in saving the people that were on board the Fox.

1 22.30 on 24 July. The log is dated from noon to noon.

[3] BIOGRAPHERS' REFERENCES TO THE LOSS OF LORD NELSON'S
RIGHT ARM

(a) *Life of Nelson*, by Robert Southey. Ed. by David Hannay. 1897

Page 134. (After Santa Cruz.) 'His sufferings from the lost limb were long and painful. A nerve had been taken up in one of the ligatures at the time of the operation; and the ligature, according to the practice of the French surgeons was of silk instead of waxed thread, and the ends of the ligature being pulled every day, in hopes of bringing it away, occasioned fresh agony. He had scarcely any intermission of pain, day or night, for three months after his return to England.'

(b) *The Life of the Right Hon. Horatio Lord Viscount Nelson*, by Mr Harrison. Vol. 1. 1806.

P. 220. 'The Rear-Admiral, on getting aboard the *Theseus*, immediately suffered the amputation of his arm; but, some mistake having occurred, in taking up one of the arteries, which is described as having been united with a nerve, by an ingenious French surgeon, he long felt the most excruciating tortures.'

(c) *Nelson*, by Carola Oman. 1947.

Page 248. 'In record time, the *Seahorse* was ready and Admiral Nelson came on board in great spirits. . . . Sir Horatio had brought with him four years' luggage, a surgeon. . . and a number of sick and wounded from the *Theseus*, and Mrs Fremantle liked the look of Mr Eshelby sufficiently to confide her own symptoms before the day was out.'

(d) Page 244. 'The amputation to which he had resigned himself from the moment he was hit was performed as soon as possible, and it appears that the tale, often doubted, that Nelson's arm was taken off by a Frenchman is founded on fact. M. Ronicet, Assistant Surgeon of the *Theseus*, was a French royalist refugee, collected by Lord Hood at Toulon, in August, 1793. Like the principal medical officer of the *Theseus*, he had followed Nelson, who had the highest opinion of him, from the *Agamemnon* into the *Captain*.

From the surgeon's point of view there was much for which to be thankful. There were not many other wounded urgently needing attention, the ship was at anchor and her guns were not in action. . . . After his ordeal he (Nelson) congratulated himself on "a good surgeon".'

- [4] *THE KEITH PAPERS*, Vol. II. Navy Records Society. Publ. 1951
P. 168. 11. Nelson to Keith.

Palermo, April 6. 1800.

My dear Lord,

I entreat you will promote Mr Louis Remonier,¹ Surgeon of the "Speedy". He has long served with me and *assisted* in cutting off my arm. In doing this favour I shall be gratified.

Ever your faithful friend

(Sd) Bronte Nelson of the Nile

¹ This is the spelling in Nelson's holograph. The request was refused and Nelson's expostulation of 19 May is printed by Nicolas, IV, 245, under the wrong date of 3 June; Nicolas spells the name 'Ronicet'.

- [5] LIBRARY OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS, LONDON

Company of Surgeons Examination Book 1745-1800

At a Court of Examiners holden at the Theatre the 7th day of February, 1793

Folio 80.

Present

Messieurs Howard, Wyatt, Minors, Hawkins, Warner, Grindall, Watson, Gunning, Lucas, Walker.

Arthur Ahmuty. 3rd Mate. 3rd Rate.

At a Court of Examiners holden at the Theatre the 6th day of October, 1796

Folio 145.

Present

Messieurs Minors, Gunning, Earle, Hawkins, Warner, Lucas, Howard, Cooper.

Arthur Ahmuty. Surgeon 3rd Rate.

- [6] PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE

Ind/9228. Admiralty (Secretary) Class II, 40

Arthur Ahmuty.

From

Montague, to Surgeon.

Firm—21 Oct. 1796—22 July 97. 9. 3. 2.

Harpy (Sp) 23 July 1797.

Driver. 4 March 1799.

- [7] PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE

H.M.S. *Harpy*

Muster Book. 1 July 1797—31 August 1797. Captain Henry Bazely					
No.	Appt.	Joined	Name	Rank	Discharged
1	1 Nov. 1796	1 Nov. 1796 Commn. 4 April 1796	Henry Bazely	Captain	
10	1 Nov. 1796	1 Nov. 1796	Benj. Outram	Surgeon	10 Dec. 1796 Dead.
26	" "	" "	Tirrel Willcox	Surgeon's Mate	
151	4 Jan. 1797	4 Jan. 1797 By warrant	George Smith	Surgeon	D. 22 July 1797 Superseded.
190	23 July 1797	23 July 1797 By warrant	Arthur Ahmuty ¹	"	Still serving in Jan. 1798.

¹ First appears in *Harpy's* monthly Books, July–August 1797.

[8]

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE

H.M.S. *Harpy*, sloop

Master's Log. *April 1796–November 1797. (Ad. 52/3069.)

1797 Moored at Sheerness from June 30th until July 23rd.
 July 23rd. Wind N.W. Fresh breezes and cloudy with rain at intervals.
 Sunday 4.o. Unmoored and hove in to half a cable.
 July 24. Wind varbl. West & N.W. Light breezes and pleasant. 1.o. Weighed and made
 Monday. sail. Came to with the small Bower in 7 fathoms water. 2 Sisters North, South
 Moored in the Foreland E. by S. 12.o Fresh breezes and cloudy. 2 Weighed and made sail.
 Downs 7.o came too in the Downs and moored with a cable each way.
 July 25 Light breezes and pleasant. Later fresh breezes and foggy.
 Tuesday
 July 26 Fresh breezes and foggy. Noon, light breezes and pleasant. Came on board
 Wednesday 2 Pilots from Deal.
 July 27 $\frac{1}{2}$ past 1 unmoored and hove in short. 4.o. weighed and made sail. (Cross
 Thursday bearings given.) 11.o made sail to the northward.
 Cruising in Channel until Monday Aug. 7th when anchored in Dover Roads.

Note. The log is dated from noon to noon.

[9]

LIBRARY OF ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

Company of Surgeons Examination Book 1745–1800

At a Court of Examiners holden at the Theatre the 7th day of April 1791

Folio 64.

Present

Messieurs Hawkins, Lucas, Howard, Pope, Warner, Grindall, Watson, Minors,
Gunning.

Thos. Eshelby. 3rd Mate. 3rd Rate.

4th day of September, 1794.

Folio 108.

Present

Messieurs Walker, Wyatt, Warner, Grindall, Minors, Lucas, Howard.

Thos. Eshelby. Surgeon 4th Rate.

[10]

MEDICAL JOURNAL OF H.M.S. *THESEUS*

From 27th May 1797 to 26th May 1798

(Kept by Thomas Eshelby, Surgeon, to 20 August 1797)

Date	Patient	Remarks
1797. July 25.	Admiral Nelson.	Compound fracture of the right arm by a musket ball passing through a little above the elbow an artery divided; the arm was immediately amputated and the following given him: Opii gr. ii. ft. Pil. statim. s.
„ „ 26		Rested pretty well and quite easy. Tea, Soup, and Sago. Lemonade and Tamarind Drink.

Further entries on 28 and 31 July, 1 and 20 August.

A technical account of Lord Nelson's operation and subsequent convalescence and recovery will be found on pp. 115–155 under the 'Medical Life of Lord Nelson' in *Idols and Invalids*, by James Kemble, Ch.M., F.R.C.S., 1933.

[11] PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE

Ad.3/27H.

Admiralty Medical Records.
'Selected'Index of selected
Medical Officers'
Journals.*Seahorse.* 1 Dec. 1796-17 May, 1797.

Surgeon, David Fleming.

1 Dec. 1796-1 Aug. 1797.

Thomas Eshelby.¹

20 Aug. 1797-20 Aug. 1798.

Channel, Cadiz,
Mediterranean,
Blockade of Alexandria.

This Surgeon was appointed from the *Theseus* to attend the Admiral to England. He landed at Portsmouth 1st Sept. He amputated Lord Nelson's right arm 25 July, 1797.²

Rear Adml. Sir H. Nelson.

Capt. Freemantle

Lt. Douglas.

In an unsuccessful attack upon Santa Cruz made by Nelson several officers and 141 men were killed and the Admiral lost his right arm 24 (sic) July 1797. Apparently many of those wounded in the *Theseus* were sent home by the *Seahorse*.²

¹ Thomas Eshelby's journals seem to continue until 29 August 1801, when he was succeeded by W. Holden.

² These notes have been added in another handwriting.

[12] LIBRARY OF ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

Company of Surgeons. Examination Book 1745-1800

At a private Court of Examiners holden at their House in Lincoln's Inn Fields the 12th day of October, 1797.

Folio 162.

Present

Messieurs Gunning, Hawkins, Minors, Howard, Lucas, Earle, Warner.

Rear-Admiral Sir Horatio Nelson, K.B. applied for examination in consequence of a wound rec'd in his Eye and the Court was of opinion that the Injury received by him is fully equal to the loss of an Eye.

At a Court of Examiners holden at their House in Lincoln's Inn Fields the 1st day of March, 1798.

Folio 168.

Present

Messieurs Earle, Hawkins, Long, Warner, Lucas, Howard, Chandler, Cooper.

Admiral Sir Horatio Nelson claimed £135. 1. 0. for the Chirurgical and Medical Expenses of the Cure of his Arm which was thought reasonable and allowed.

[13] The letter given below has only recently come to light and Lord Nelson's reference to his still painful wound is of interest.

Addressed to Mrs Robinson.

No 59 St Aubins St.
Plymouth Dock.

On outside.
London October fifth,
1797

Franked on envelope.

Free.

H. Walpole.

London 5th Oct.

Dear Madam.

I sincerely sympathise with you in the loss of Lieut Robinson and have only to add that I shall be happy to forward and give my aid to your petition should it fall in my way but it cannot be expected I can exert myself much at present as I feel great pain at times from my wound.

I am

your very humble servant
(Sd) Horatio Nelson.

1 Lieut. Raby Robinson, of the Marines, H.M.S. *Leander*, was one of the seven officers killed in the attack on Santa Cruz, 24/25 July 1797. The letter is now in the possession of Lady Webb, widow of Admiral Sir Richard Webb, K.C.M.G., C.B.

[14] Admiralty Record Office

ADMIRALTY SURGEONS SERVICES, 1742-1819

THOMAS ESHELBY

Ship.	From.	Rank.	To.	Y.	M.	W.	D.
<i>Princess Royal</i>	18 April, 1791.	Mate	9 Sept, 1791.		6	1	3
<i>Triton</i>	14 Sept, 1791.	"	17 Sept, 1791.				4
<i>Triton</i>	23 Sept, 1791.	"	16 Oct, 1792.	1	0	3	3
<i>Advice</i>	17 Oct, 1792.	Asst Surgn.	30 Oct, 1793.	1	0	2	0
<i>Europa</i>	14 Jan, 1794.	Mate	24 Mch, 1794.		2	2	0
<i>Goelan</i>	25 Mch, 1794.	Surgeon	18 Sept, 1794.		5	1	0
<i>Camel</i>	26 Sept, 1794.	"	17 Feb, 1796.	1	5	0	5
<i>Captain</i>	18 Feb, 1796.	"	26 May, 1797.	1	3	2	0
<i>Theseus</i>	27 May, 1797.	"	18 Aug, 1797.		3	0	0
<i>Seahorse</i>	19 Aug, 1797.	"	28 Aug, 1801.	4	0	1	2
<i>Hercules</i>	30 Apr, 1802.	"	20 Apr, 1803.		12	2	1
					(sic)		
<i>Ganges</i>	21 Apr. 1803.	"	16 Jul, 1803.		3	0	3
<i>Caton</i>	27 Aug, 1803.	"	19 Dec, 1809.		(Left blank)		

Admiralty Record Office

NAVAL MEDICAL LIST, 1811

Thomas Eshelby. Surgeon. 9 May, 1793.¹ *Le Caton*. P.H.S. 8 Aug, 1805. D.D. February, 1811.

1 Probably date of his seniority as Surgeon in the Navy List. He did not pass for Surgeon of a 4th-Rate at the Royal College of Surgeons until 4 September 1794. H.M.S. *Caton*, formerly *Le Caton*, 64, was taken from the French by Lord Hood in the Mona Passage, 19 April 1782, and was added to the Royal Navy.

London 5th Oct

Dear Madam

I sincerely sympathize with you
in the loss of Lieut. Robinson - and have
only to add I shall be happy to forward
and give my aid to your petition, ~~which~~
it falls in my way - but it can
be expected I can exert myself much
at present - as I feel great pain at
times from my wound.

I am

Yours very humble Serv^t

Horatio Nelson

FACSIMILE OF A LETTER FROM SIR HORATIO NELSON, 5 OCTOBER 1797, TO
MRS ROBINSON, WIDOW OF LIEUTENANT RABY ROBINSON, ROYAL MARINES,
WHO LOST HIS LIFE AT SANTA CRUZ 24/25 JULY 1797

(By kind permission of Lady Webb)



MAURITIUS 1810

By Brigadier H. A. Joly de Lotbinière

THE operations leading to the capture of the Isle de France, by which name Mauritius was known while under French sovereignty, are not without interest to the general reader, affording as they do, a good example of the advantages to be gained by the possession of sea-power, followed by a well-planned and perfectly executed amphibious operation resulting as it did in the eventual capitulation of the island on 3 December 1810.

The year 1809, which marked the opening stages of the operations against Mauritius, had so far gone badly for the British Empire. Early in that year British arms had sustained a severe reverse at Corunna, which in effect had been an earlier Dunkirk, though luckily on a smaller scale. Sir Arthur Wellesley in Portugal had not yet won his victory at Talavera which was to put fresh heart into the British Army, while in India our position had been seriously jeopardized by the mutiny which had broken out among the Company's troops, British and Indian, in the Presidency of Madras, due to the tyrannical behaviour of the Governor, Sir George Barlow.

Added to these already depressing circumstances, the trade of Britain with the East was being virtually strangled by the French Navy, based on the Isle de France. Ever since war had broken out in February 1793, unceasing depredations had been made against the Merchant shipping of Britain by ships of the French Navy and by privateers based on Bourbon, as Réunion was then called, and on Mauritius. Losses amounting to many millions of sterling had been incurred: in 1807, during six weeks, £200,000 worth of damage had been inflicted on the Port of Calcutta alone.

England then, as later, depended on her overseas trade to finance the heavy cost of the war in Europe, and it was felt both by the Government at home, and by the East India Company that energetic measures must immediately be taken to put a stop to this incessant drain on ships and treasure. Accordingly, early in 1809, a small expedition from Bombay, consisting of two companies of the 56th Foot together with an equal number of Sepoys under the command of Colonel Keating was despatched to the small island of Rodrigues, lying some 350 miles due east of Mauritius.

These two islands, together with Bourbon, form the Mascarene Group, named after Pedro Mascarenhas, the distinguished Portuguese navigator, who explored this group in 1528. Mauritius, the subject of this article,

was first discovered in 1507 by Fernandez Pereira, lieutenant to the famous Albuquerque; but it was not until 1598 that it was formally annexed by any Power, when a Dutch squadron under Admiral van Waerwijek took possession of the island, naming it Mauritius in honour of the then reigning Stadtholder Maurice of Nassau. It was not, however, until 1636 that any effort was made by the Dutch East India Company to implement their admiral's action. A small settlement was then established on the north shore of what is now Grand Port, a large harbour situated on the south-east coast of the island. The colony seems never to have been a success owing to the type of settler installed by the Company, and through their unfortunate choice in Governors. In 1658 the colony was abandoned on economic grounds, owing to the establishment of a settlement at the Cape in 1652 by Mynheer van Riebeeck, and due also to the fact that with the improvement in ship design the Company's ships were now able to sail direct from Table Bay to Batavia, without having to call at Mauritius en route for fresh water and vegetables. In 1664 a change of policy among the Directors of the Company, due no doubt to their fear that the island might be occupied by one or other of their hated rivals, caused the resettlement of Port South East. The colony was then maintained until 1710, when it was finally abandoned to the tender mercies of the 'Maroons', as the escaped slaves who lived in the impenetrable forests of the interior were called, the Dutch having first carried out a 'scorched-earth' policy by destroying all buildings, crops and ebony trees. For the next few years the island became the haunt of pirates, who at that time infested the Indian Ocean. In 1715 it was annexed by Captain Dufresne of the *Chasseur*, but it was not until six years later that this annexation was ratified by the Chevalier de Fougerey from the neighbouring island of Bourbon which had been in French hands since 1665, when he erected a mast and shield bearing the arms of King Louis XV. The former Dutch settlement at Grand Port was now renamed Port Bourbon, and was occupied by emigrants brought from the island of that name. From that date until the present day Mauritius has remained in permanent occupation. In 1735 Monsieur Mahé de la Bourdonnais was appointed Governor of the two islands by the French East India Company, and with his advent the whole future of the island was changed. It was due to the foresight of this brilliant and gifted administrator that Mauritius was selected to be the bastion of French power in the East. The capital was shifted from Port Bourbon to Port Louis, a large deep-water harbour on the north-west coast. Settlers were brought from France, India and the neighbouring island of Madagascar. Sugar canes were introduced, not for the first time, however, since the Dutch had previously fostered this industry, only to have it repeatedly destroyed by rats introduced into the

island from wrecks. In short, Mauritius became a base from which attacks were planned and made on British India, and from which numerous corsairs set forth to plunder the rich East Indiamen on their long voyage home round the Cape.

The story of La Bourdonnais is a romance in itself and his name is still an honoured one in the island which owes so much to his energetic and capable governorship. Unfortunately he quarrelled with Dupleix, the Governor of French India, with the result that in 1746 he was relieved of his command and ordered home to France. On his way back he was captured by the British and was brought to London, where he was shown every mark of respect by his captors, who shortly afterwards released him on parole, permitting him to return to France. On his arrival he was arrested on false charges of peculation, and was thrown into the Bastille without trial. There he remained until 1751, when he was tried and honourably acquitted. Worn out by his sufferings in prison, and broken in spirit by the ingratitude of his king, Bertrand Francois Comte Mahé de la Bourdonnais died in poverty in 1751.

From 1745 to 1767 the young colony made but slow progress, and it was in 1767 that the island was brought under the direct control of the Crown, the administration having hitherto been in the somewhat ineffectual hands of the French East India Company. The Revolution of 1789 had little real effect on the life of the colony. True, titles were abolished and a Colonial Assembly, on the lines of the National Assembly in Paris, had been created. But the land still remained in the hands of the large plantation owners, many of whom were of aristocratic birth. On the resumption of hostilities in 1803, Napoleon appointed General Decaen as Governor and Commander-in-Chief of all French establishments east of the Cape. In making this choice the Emperor was undoubtedly influenced by Decaen's well-known dislike of the British, as well as by his proved capacity as a military commander. In 1799 Decaen had been promoted Général de Division, and had played an important part in the battle of Hohenlinden in the following year. At the back of Napoleon's mind there lay always the hope of fulfilling his great Indian project, foiled for the moment by the French defeat in Egypt. In nominating Decaen as Commander-in-Chief of all French forces in the East he no doubt felt that when opportunity offered he would find in him an individual worthy in all respects to lead this great enterprise. Soon after his arrival, Decaen visited Pondicherry where he found matters in poor shape, and the settlement threatened by the Governor-General the Marquis of Wellesley. He thereupon withdrew to Mauritius, where he took energetic steps to build up a fleet of privateers with which to harry the East India Company's ships in the Indian Ocean.

There is no doubt that Napoleon's choice of Decaen was a good one. He was a soldier and administrator of undoubted ability, possessing courage and strength of character. His troops, so far as Mauritius was concerned, were poorly trained and deplorably weak in numbers. The regular forces garrisoning the island amounted to some 1500, and consisted, for the most part, of marines and a number of deserters from captured British ships, mostly of Irish origin. Discipline had been extremely slack under the Republican régime, but the new Governor took early steps to rectify matters. In addition to the regular garrison a *levée en masse* produced about 10,000 militiamen, of very doubtful fighting quality, poorly armed and devoid of any military training. As regards land defences, Port Louis the capital, now known as Port Napoleon, was fairly adequately defended by a series of shore batteries north and south of the harbour entrance, together with field defences of rather a primitive character guarding the two roads leading respectively from the north and the south into the capital. The rear of the town was protected by an amphitheatre of hills traversed only by jungle tracks unfit even for infantry. The only remaining harbour suitable for seagoing ships was Port Bourbon, site of the former Dutch and later French settlement. This too, had changed its name, and had now become Port Impérial. The defences of this harbour will be described more fully later. Apart from these two defended harbours, a number of small batteries, some of them mounting only a pair of guns apiece, were scattered round the coast at points which appeared suitable for an enemy landing. Most of these forts consisted only of stone and earthen parapets and were quite incapable of withstanding an infantry attack. The manning too of these forts must have made severe demands on General Decaen's small force of regulars, and must also have considerably depleted his mobile striking force for use against a possible enemy landing.

The island itself lies within the tropics and is 500 miles due east of Madagascar. The sister island of Bourbon lies 109 miles to the south-west, its 10,000 ft. peak Le Piton des Neiges being sometimes visible on clear days. Mauritius, which is shaped somewhat like a pear, is forty miles long and about thirty miles broad at its widest point. Of the 720 square miles comprising its area, over a third is broken ground deeply indented by numerous watercourses and covered with volcanic rocks and thick scrub. In the centre of the island the hills rise to 2700 ft., culminating in the famous pinnacle of Pieter Both, an inverted cone balanced on the summit of that mountain. The southern portion of the island is also hilly, and at the period under discussion was covered with dense forest traversed only by one road from Port Napoleon to Port Impérial which lie twenty-three miles apart. The country round the coast, except in the south-west of the island, is flat

and is suited for agriculture, particularly for the growing of sugar-cane. Only in the north is there a plain of any considerable area suitable for the passage of all arms. Except for a few miles on the south and south-west coasts, the beaches everywhere are admirably suited for boat landings, once the surrounding coral reefs have been safely traversed. These reefs, on which the surf breaks in a never ending roar, are the real defences provided by nature, and it was on them that the garrison chiefly relied in the event of a sudden descent from the sea by the British.

The climate of the island at that time was extremely healthy in spite of the fact that it lay well within the tropics. This was due to the south-east Trade wind which blows almost continually throughout the year. It was not until fifty years later that the colony earned its grim reputation for malaria, this disease having been imported into the island in the blood of the Indian coolies brought to work the cane-fields after Emancipation. During the summer, which commences in November, there is always the threat of cyclones, which at times bring death and destruction both to land and sea. The laws governing these storms were at that time but imperfectly understood, and it was seldom that more than a few hours' warning of their approach was available.

At the time we are considering, the inhabitants of the colony, apart from the naval and military garrison, numbered about 80,000, and were composed for the most part of African slaves from Madagascar and the mainland of Africa, employed as labourers on the plantations. The land-owning and middle classes were of French origin, and resembled closely their counterparts in the West Indies. This briefly, was the scene of the stirring events now to be related.

We must return to Rodrigues 350 miles to the east, where Colonel Keating of the 56th Foot was in possession of that island. At that time it was inhabited by only two French families neither of whom were on speaking terms! Encouraged by the ease with which this island had been taken, Keating, with the assistance of Commodore Rowley, the Senior Naval Officer of the squadron employed on blockading Mauritius, on 21 September 1809 made a sudden descent on the island of Bourbon, where he landed at St Paul's Bay on the west coast, the only harbour which the island possesses. Taken by surprise, the French Commandant des Bruslys, after a struggle lasting two days, surrendered, and shortly afterwards committed suicide. After burning all military stores of any value and blowing up the batteries, Keating withdrew to Rodrigues, well satisfied with the results of his raid.

On the news of this success reaching India, the Governor-General decided that the moment was ripe to destroy once and for all the hornets'

nest on Mauritius. In consequence, it was decided next year to carry out this operation in two phases. First, Bourbon was to be reduced and used as a naval base, and then Mauritius was to be invaded. With this object in view, the Government of Madras was ordered to send to Rodrigues a mixed force of British and Indian troops amounting to 3500 men. This force reached Rodrigues in June 1810 and included H.M.'s 69th and 86th Regiments, and two battalions of Madras Infantry. Again, under the care of Commodore Rowley, Colonel Keating's force set sail for Bourbon on 3 July, reaching the neighbourhood of St Denis, the capital, on the 7th. In order to create a diversion, the 86th, under Colonel Fraser their C.O., were landed at Grande Chaloupe six miles to the west of the town, while the main body under Keating attempted a landing to the eastward. Owing, however, to heavy surf, only several hundred men succeeded in wading ashore, and it was decided to abandon the attempt. Next morning the main body landed at Grande Chaloupe with orders to support Colonel Fraser's column which had by now been held up by regular troops from St Denis. After some fairly heavy fighting on the part of the 86th, a flag of truce was sent out by the Governor. On hearing this Colonel Keating, unaccompanied by any of his staff, galloped into St Denis, and by sheer force of personality browbeat the unfortunate Governor into surrendering unconditionally. By 10 July the whole island was in British hands, at the cost of only ninety-seven killed and wounded. For their part in these operations the Welch Regiment and the Royal Ulster Rifles now bear the battle honour 'Bourbon' on their regimental colours.

In the meantime, plans were maturing in India for the collection of a large force for the conquest of Mauritius itself. It was decided to send contingents from Bombay and Madras as well as from Bengal and the Cape. Had the Government been aware of the ease with which the capture of Bourbon had been made and had they been properly advised as to the garrison and defences of Mauritius, it is certain so large a force would not have been sent overseas. As it was, Colonel Keating was quite prepared to take on the operation without further reinforcements, but in this he was overruled by Vice-Admiral Bertie, Commander-in-Chief of the naval forces at the Cape and in the South Indian ocean, who very naturally was not prepared to accept responsibility for a possible reverse.

With a view still further to strengthen the British blockade on Mauritius, a small expedition was despatched from Bourbon under the command of Captain Pym of H.M. Frigate *Sirius* with orders to capture and hold the Ile de la Passe at the southern or main entrance of Grand Port Harbour. Accompanying Captain Pym was Captain Willoughby of the Frigate *Néréide*, who by his courage and daring had already gained a reputation as

a leader second to none. He was indeed a veritable fire-eater and had accompanied Keating's troops as a volunteer during their operations against St Denis. Previously, he had conducted a series of raids, or what would now be termed 'Commando' landings, at different points on the coast of Mauritius with a view to creating alarm and uncertainty among the French population.

After one unsuccessful attempt to seize the Ile de la Passe, owing to bad weather, a second landing was effected in boats from the *Sirius* on the night of 13 August. This time the island was captured after a stout resistance, the British force having suffered the loss of its leader Lieutenant Watling, R.N., together with six ratings killed and eighteen wounded. In surrendering, the French commandant, Captain Escussot omitted to destroy his code-book of signals which thus fell intact into British hands. Next day Captain Pym handed over the island to Captain Willoughby of the *Néréide*, who promptly landed fifty grenadiers of the 33rd and 69th Regiments to act as a garrison, together with Lieutenant Davies of H.E.I. Company's Engineers, who was instructed to place the island in a sound state of defence. As already stated, Grand Port Harbour lies on the south-east coast of Mauritius, and is protected from the weather by large coral reefs which run parallel to the coast. There are two narrow entrances into the harbour, the southern entrance known as 'La Passe' being only some 300 yards wide. The outer end of this passage is guarded by the Ile de la Passe and any ships entering the harbour by this way have of necessity to pass within close range of the island's batteries. The northern entrance, although not so restricted, is shallower and ships entering by it have to beat up the channel. In consequence, the possession of the Ile de la Passe virtually rendered the harbour unusable by the French. Nevertheless, to make his position doubly secure Captain Willoughby at 1 a.m. on 18 August, with a mixed force of sailors, soldiers and marines landed at Bois aux Amourettes at the northern entrance to the harbour and stormed the French Battery at Pointe du Diable covering that entrance. This assault was entirely successful and was accomplished without loss to the British. After destroying the fort and spiking and dismounting the guns, Willoughby withdrew, but not before he had distributed a number of propaganda leaflets printed in French. This scheme of influencing the French inhabitants of Mauritius, who were known to be unfavourably inclined towards the present régime, was the idea of Mr Robert Farquhar, the newly appointed Governor of Bourbon. A number of these pamphlets reached the hands of the authorities and it is interesting to record that they led to a protest by General Decaen to the British pointing out that this method of warfare was unworthy of Britain and most dishonourable! On the morning of Monday 20th a fleet of five

French warships was sighted by the *Néréide*, which had remained at anchor inside the 'Passe'. As they approached, French colours were hoisted by the frigate and on the fort, and by means of the captured signal code, the French Commodore Duperré was led to believe that the harbour was safe to enter. He, therefore, signalled his ships to enter in line-ahead formation, the *Victor* (Lieutenant Morice) leading, followed by the *Minerve* (Captain Bouvet) and the *Ceylon* and *Windham*, both East India Company prizes, his own ship the *Bellone* bringing up the rear. As the *Victor* came abreast of the *Néréide* the Union Flag was hoisted and the guns of both the frigate and the fort were brought to bear on her with the result that she struck her colours and was ordered to anchor, which she promptly did. It was now too late for the *Minerve* and *Ceylon* to go about with the result that both these ships were compelled to run the gauntlet of the *Néréide's* fire which they appear to have done with some success. The *Windham*, however, was able to go about in time and escaped to the southward. In the meantime the *Victor* was ordered to cut her cable by Captain Bouvet and she then rejoined the other ships inside the harbour. The *Bellone*, which was the last ship to enter, apart from exchanging broadsides with the enemy took no steps to board the *Néréide* which being at anchor was at her mercy. On gaining the inner harbour the four French ships anchored inside the Grand Paté reef where they felt secure against attack from without. Steps were also taken that evening to remove all buoys and harbour marks, and General Decaen was informed by mounted messenger of the happenings at Grand Port. Meanwhile, Willoughby had despatched a boat to find Captain Pym in the *Sirius* to ask his assistance in attacking the enemy. Next morning under a flag of truce an officer was sent to Duperré to claim the *Victor* as a prize of war, which claim, as may well be imagined, was emphatically refused! In the meantime the *Windham* had been captured by the *Sirius*, when Captain Pym learnt from her of the *Néréide's* action of the previous day. He thereupon set course for Grand Port, having despatched the *Windham* to Bourbon to seek reinforcements. By noon on Wednesday 22nd Pym had reached the Ile de la Passe where Willoughby met him. Willoughby was insistent that Pym should attack without further delay and after some hesitation on Pym's part he gave way to the fiery Willoughby and agreed. With the *Sirius* leading, followed by the *Néréide* the attack began at 5 p.m. The *Sirius* did not, however, make much progress as she grounded shortly afterwards and remained aground until 8.30 a.m. next day. By 4 p.m. on 23 August reinforcements in the shape of the frigates *Iphigenia* (Captain Lambert) and the *Magicienne* (Captain Curtis) arrived off the harbour. After a short conference Pym, as S.N.O., ordered the attack to commence. By now it was 4.30 p.m. with barely an hour and a half's daylight remaining.

All navigation marks had been removed by the enemy and there appeared to be every prospect of the attack ending in disaster. The *Bellone* and *Minerve* mounted 44 and 48 guns respectively and with the *Ceylon* (34) and the *Victor* (26) made up a formidable squadron. With the exception of the prize *Ceylon*, these ships were all manned by sailors of the Imperial Navy and were well found in every respect. Against this force were pitted the *Magicienne* (49), *Néréide* (40), *Iphigenia* (40) and the *Sirius* (36). Pym's object in attacking the French under such adverse circumstances was prompted no doubt by a desire for prize money and also by fear that a relieving squadron under Commodore Hamelin, known to be cruising off Port Louis, might rob him of his victory. But taking everything into consideration his action was unjustified and ill-judged to say the least. The *Néréide*, which led the squadron, successfully navigated the shoals and came to anchor alongside the *Bellone*. The *Sirius* which followed her was again unlucky, as she grounded on a small reef some 700 yards from the *Néréide*, in which position she was unable to play any part in the ensuing action. Meanwhile, the *Iphigenia* which had been ordered to lay alongside the *Minerve* successfully avoided grounding and came to anchor withing gunshot of her adversary. The *Magicienne*, which was the last of the British frigates to enter the harbour, took ground on the *Néréide* Reef, 200 yards to windward of the *Iphigenia* where she remained hard aground throughout the whole of the engagement. While the *Magicienne* was endeavouring to haul herself off the reef, the *Néréide* and *Iphigenia* opened fire on the *Ceylon* with such good effect that the *Ceylon* again surrendered! In the meantime, the *Victor's* cables had been cut by gunfire with the result that she was carried by the tide away from the fight, in which she too played no further part. The *Iphigenia* and *Néréide* next turned their attention to the *Minerve* and *Bellone* whose anchor cables were also cut as a result of their fire. Before this had occurred, the *Ceylon* had cut her own cables and had allowed herself to drift to leeward, where she grounded broadside on to her late adversaries. Soon the *Bellone* and *Minerve* had also grounded on the same shoal with the result that the three ships overlapped each other, the leading ship, which was the *Bellone*, being the only one able to bring the full weight of her port broadside of 22 guns to bear on the British. At about 6.30 p.m., just two hours after the signal to attack had been made, two of the British ships, and all four of the French, were hard and fast on the coral! At 7.30 p.m. the *Néréide's* best bower spring was shot away with the result that she swung bows on to the *Bellone*. The *Bellone* swept her decks with concentrated fire at close range, killing and wounding nearly half the ship's company. The brave but rash Willoughby was blinded in his left eye, and was compelled to go below; but before doing so he gave orders for another

anchor to be dropped by means of which the ship regained her former position. Fire was then reopened with her starboard guns. By 8.30 p.m. the *Néréide* ceased firing and henceforward took no further part in the battle. Meanwhile, Lambert in the *Iphigenia* had received orders from Pym in the grounded *Sirius* to warp his ship out of the fight and to come to the *Sirius's* assistance. Apparently he took no steps to implement these instructions, and remained at anchor throughout the night. In this engagement the *Magicienne* had played but little part, as for the latter part of the fight her guns had been unable to reach the French effectively. At 8 p.m. Commodore Duperré was wounded in the head, and Bouvet from the *Minerve* took over command. By 10.30 that night the action was over. Willoughby, who had remained in charge in spite of his fearful wound, had, in the meantime, despatched a boat to the *Sirius* asking permission to transfer his men to the *Iphigenia* with a view to setting the *Néréide* on fire and letting her drift on to the French frigates. Pym's only reply was to instruct Willoughby to transfer to the *Sirius* which meant abandoning his wounded, which he very properly refused to do. He then surrendered, further resistance being useless. When dawn broke on Friday 24 August it revealed the *Néréide* a complete wreck. Not a soul was to be seen on deck, but it was not until 3 p.m. that she was boarded and attention given to her wounded. Out of a complement of 281, she had lost 230 in killed and wounded. Willoughby was taken on board the *Bellone* whence he and Commodore Duperré were transferred to the shore, where they were placed side by side in the same temporary hospital. It is pleasant to record that Willoughby recovered and that in spite of his blind eye he, like Nelson, rose to flag rank as did his adversary Duperré. Meanwhile, Lambert, who had remained inactive all night, at 7 a.m. asked permission to board the *Bellone* as a last desperate means of winning victory. Pym, however, refused, and ordered him once more to warp the *Iphigenia* out of range of the French. It was not until 4 p.m. that he moved his ship and when passing the *Magicienne* stopped to assist her to refloat. This was found to be impossible, and by 7.30 p.m. her crew having abandoned her, she was set on fire and shortly afterwards blew up. By 9 a.m. next day (25th), Pym realizing that his ship must share the fate of the *Magicienne*, transferred all stores and people to the already over-crowded *Iphigenia* and at 11 a.m. the *Sirius* blew up and sank. Lambert thereupon took over command and anchored off the Ile de la Passe. Why he did not attempt to escape before the arrival of Hamelin's division from Port Louis still remains a mystery. He did not however do so, with the result that he was compelled to surrender both his ship and the Fort on the morning of 28 August 1810.

British casualties had been four frigates lost and 105 killed and 169

wounded against the French loss of only 36 killed and 112 wounded. In spite of the gallantry shown by Willoughby and the men of the *Néréide*, the British, five years after Trafalgar, had sustained a decisive and somewhat ignominious defeat. That all four captains were acquitted at their subsequent court-martial was due to satisfaction at the successful conclusion of the operations, and to the pride felt by the court in Willoughby and his gallant ship's-company.

The disaster of Grand Port had no effect, however, on the plans now rapidly taking shape for the grand assault on Mauritius. It will be remembered it had been decided that each Presidency should be asked to furnish a contingent, together with a small force from the Cape. All four contingents were to rendezvous at Rodrigues from where a combined naval and military assault would be launched as soon as possible, since the cyclone season was fast approaching. To command the land forces Major-General the Hon. John Abercromby, C.-in-C. Bombay Presidency, had been selected by Lord Minto. This distinguished soldier was the second son of the famous Sir Ralph Abercromby, killed at Alexandria in 1801. General Abercromby was an experienced officer, with the West Indian and Low Countries' campaigns to his credit. He had also served under his father in Egypt and had assisted at the successful beach landing at Aboukir Bay in the face of strong enemy opposition. At the period in question he was 38 years of age, and had been promoted major-general five years earlier. Command of all naval forces devolved on Vice-Admiral Bertie, whom we have already met. General Abercromby and his staff left Bombay late in August unaware of the disaster at Grand Port. On the morning of 17 September, his ship, H.M.S. *Ceylon*, while reconnoitring the south-west coast of Mauritius had the misfortune to be taken by the French frigates *Venus* and *Victor*. Fortunately for the General, Commodore Rowley in the *Boadicea* shortly afterwards appeared on the scene and by five o'clock that evening the *Ceylon* was once more in British hands. This was the turning point in British defeats at sea in this campaign, and before long Port Louis was once more under close naval blockade by Rowley and his frigates.

By 22 November the Madras and Bombay contingents had arrived at their rendezvous, and the arrival of the belated Bengal and Cape Brigades was being awaited with impatience by the two commanders. Finally it was decided to wait no longer, since the cyclone season had already begun, and on 26 November the expedition set sail. At the last moment the convoy carrying the Bengal contingent joined the main body. The numbers taking part have been somewhat exaggerated, and from figures taken from a parade state signed in Rodrigues by the second-in-command, Major-General Henry Warde, the strength of the Bombay and Madras contingents are shown as

6848 all ranks. If we add to this figure 2000 men for the three regiments furnished by Bengal, we get a striking force of about 9000 men. This comparatively small force was divided into no fewer than six brigades, one of which was designated the 'Reserve Brigade' under the command of the fire-eating Keating. Among the units of this Reserve Brigade was a curiously designated body named the 'Flank Battalion' comprising the flank companies of the 12th and 33rd Foot, and two companies of Keating's own regiment the 56th. This unit was destined to play a conspicuous part in the final assault on Port Louis, and was specially mentioned for its services by the G.O.C.-in-C. No fewer than seven British Line Regiments were included in the force, together with detachments of Native infantry from the three Presidencies concerned. Roughly speaking three-fifths of the force were British regulars, the remainder being sepoys who had volunteered for service overseas. Accompanying the transports, which numbered about fifty, were eighteen warships.

By afternoon of the 28th the high peaks of Mauritius were in sight and orders were given to stand off the land to avoid discovery. Next day, Thursday 29 November, dawned serene and beautiful, and the fleet, numbering in all about seventy sail, anchored in the narrow passage between Cap Malheureux, the northernmost point of the island, and Ile Coin de Mire. Hitherto, this passage had been considered too dangerous for use by ships drawing any depth, but during the months preceding the landing every foot of the beaches had been explored, soundings taken and gaps in the reef reconnoitred. Thus it was that by midday Captain Beaver of the flagship *Nisus* was ready to start disembarkation. This officer had already played a distinguished part in the landings at Alexandria, and was well known to General Abercromby. Under his able management the operation proceeded without a hitch, and by 2 p.m. two brigades were ready to march. The landing which was remote from any habitation or defences, took place at the Baie de Mapou, about a mile east of Cap Malheureux, and about twelve miles in a straight line from Port Louis. Although the arrival of the British fleet had been seen from the Signal Station at Port Louis on the Montagne de la Découverte, Decaen decided to keep his main forces in hand, and no troops appeared on the beaches to oppose the landing.

Curiously enough Colonel Keating and his Reserve Brigade were chosen to lead the column, and at 2 p.m. on a blazing afternoon laden with ammunition and rations for three days the troops began their advance on the capital. Shortly after this a heavy explosion was heard which signalled the destruction by the garrison of the Batterie Malartic, guarding the entrance to Grande Baie, four miles to the west. After skirting the beach for about two miles, the road to Port Louis entered a dense wood impenetrable even

for infantry. When half way through the wood, the Light Infantry company of the 12th Foot encountered a large patrol of Militia. After a short engagement, during which several men were killed and one officer wounded, the head of the column pushed on, reaching open country as darkness fell. By now the troops were in a state of exhaustion due to their weeks of confinement on board ship, and to the scarcity of water, since their waterbottles had long since been drained. At about 8 p.m. the order was given to bivouac for the night, the force having reached a point about seven miles from its original landing place. By dawn next day, Friday, the column was on the move, still unopposed by any enemy. By 7 a.m. they had reached Moulin au Poudre, situated some two miles from the sea on the Rivière des Citrons. Here, there was an abundance of fresh water, and the exhausted troops after satisfying their thirst lay down and slept. Soon after midday, however, their rest was disturbed by a patrol of cavalry headed by no less a person than General Decaen himself. The enemy, however, were attacked with vigour and soon withdrew but not before the General had received a ball in the heel of his right foot. Throughout the night of the 30th/1st the force bivouacked under arms, having received ample supplies from the fleet, a portion of which had landed stores on the near-by beaches. Soon after daylight, the 4th Brigade consisting of the 69th Foot, some marines and Madras Infantry, were ordered to attack and destroy the French batteries which were known to exist at Tombeau and Tortue Bays. This was accomplished without opposition. In the meantime, the main body of Abercromby's force had formed up and were continuing their march on Port Louis. After traversing about a mile, the head of the column was checked at the crossing of the Rivière du Tombeau by a strong party of French regulars and two field guns. The bridge, which here spans the river, had been partially destroyed, but this did not prevent the infantry from crossing the river which was almost dry at this season of the year. In the face of this attack the enemy withdrew, supported as it was by the field pieces of the British army which had been manhandled from the landing place, twelve miles away, by the seamen of the fleet, some 1500 of whom had volunteered for service on shore. Throughout these operations the complete integration of the military and naval forces taking part was most manifest. No personal or Service jealousies were at any time allowed to interfere with the success of this admirably planned operation.

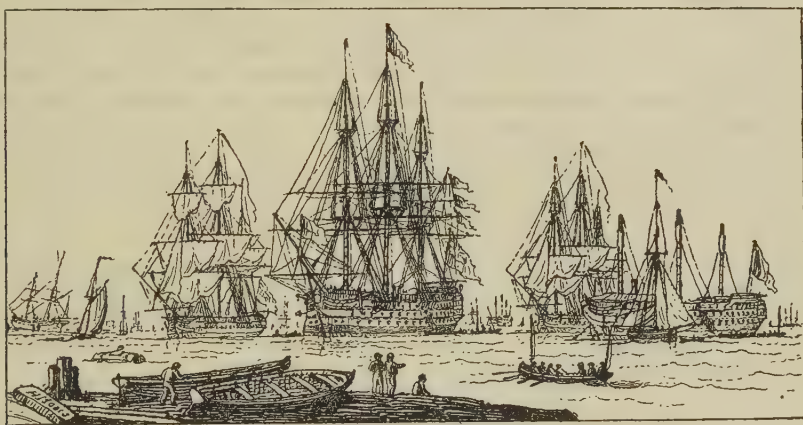
A mile or so further on the main body of the enemy was encountered for the first time, when the head of the column emerged from the wood which had hitherto enclosed the Port Louis road. The French forces, amounting to some 3500 men under Decaen's 2nd-in-command, General Vandermaesen, were drawn up in line on the far side of the little Rivière

Sèche, which at that time emptied itself into Port Louis harbour. Their right flank rested on Montagne Longue, a spur of Mt. Pieter Both, while their left ended on a slight eminence on which stood a sugar factory. The road-crossing of the Sèche was strongly guarded by artillery which did some serious execution among the leading troops, principally those of the 12th Foot (now the Suffolk Regiment). In spite of heavy casualties the battery was stormed, and a wheeling movement to the right was executed on the personal orders of General Abercromby, who had galloped to the head of the column when reports had reached him of the enemy's resistance. In this fighting both the 12th and the Flank Battalion played a distinguished part. The total casualties incurred by the British were 28 killed, 94 wounded and 45 missing, of which number the 12th lost 32 in killed and wounded alone.

The French seeing their right flank threatened, retreated on Port Louis, where they eventually fell back on to their prepared position held by General Decaen. The pursuit was then carried on almost to the Rivière Latanière on the outskirts of Port Louis, when orders to withdraw some 400 yards and bivouac for the night were issued to the exhausted troops. Next morning, Sunday 2 December, as the troops stood to arms preparatory to taking the capital by storm, a flag of truce despatched by General Decaen was received at our outposts. While the General's proposals for capitulation were being considered, the troops on both sides maintained their positions. As, however, the conditions proposed by the French were unacceptable to General Abercromby he gave orders to prepare for the final assault. This show of force on the part of the British had the effect of bringing General Decaen to his senses, and on yielding the points at issue in the articles of capitulation, hostilities ceased that evening. At 6 a.m. next day, Monday 3 December 1810, the Grenadier companies of the various regiments engaged in the attack marched into Port Louis. Thus ended in complete success the operations set in motion over a year previously. On the 2nd, the Cape contingent consisting of the 72nd Highlanders and the 87th Foot had landed at Tombeau Bay, too late to take part in the operations.

Abercromby has been blamed for the lenient terms which he granted to his adversary, which included, *inter alia*, a free passage for all military and naval persons back to France, and the retention by the inhabitants of their religion, laws and customs. But in the light of subsequent events we can only praise him for his forbearance and humane conduct which eventually reaped for itself a full measure of reward in the loyalty and devotion of Mauritius to the Crown, a loyalty which can fairly be claimed to be second to none.

After the departure of the French forces from the island, the bulk of the British returned to India in preparation for the forthcoming attack on Java, only the 12th, 72nd and 87th Foot being left to garrison the new colony. It is pleasing to record that in 1812 Major-General Abercromby was promoted lieutenant-general and was at the same time created a well deserved K.C.B.



THE SOCIETY'S ANNUAL LECTURE

THE Annual Lecture for 1952 was given in the Lecture Theatre of the National Maritime Museum on Wednesday, 2 April, by Commander W. E. May, Royal Navy, Deputy Director of the Museum. There was an audience of about 150 members and their friends, and among those present were:

Mr F. N. Adams, Lieutenant J. E. Arthur, Mr John Bailey, Mr J. A. Baldwin, Mr B. W. Bathe, Mr J. A. H. Baxter, Captain H. T. A. Bosanquet, Mr and Mrs E. Bowness, Lieutenant L. J. W. Brisley, Miss E. G. R. Callender, Mr F. G. G. Carr, Mr H. Gresham Carr, Mr F. Critchett Chapman, Mr G. H. Cleare, Mr C. H. Cotter, Mrs R. G. Cockburn, Mr T. E. Cresswell, Commander W. S. Davenport, Mr and Mrs R. H. Dolley, Vice-Admiral Sir John Edgell, Captain T. Emanuel, Mr Graham E. Farr, Miss J. M. Flavel Carter, Commander H. Forrester, Mr Charles Hampshire, Mr D. C. Harben, Mr John Hawes, Mr and Mrs A. J. Hughes, Lieut.-Colonel A. J. L. Hughes, Commander F. C. Husband-Clutton, Mr and Mrs W. Imrie-Smith, Brigadier H. A. Joly de Lotbinière, Mr Herbert Jones, Mr Basil Lavis, Captain and Mrs J. S. Learmont, Lieut.-Commander H. Morton Lee, Prof. Michael A. Lewis, Mr C. C. Lloyd, Mr and Mrs R. Lowen, Mrs McCracken, Mr Norman Macleod, Mr Frank Maggs, Mr J. P. Maggs, Mr and Mrs Edgar J. March, Lieut.-Colonel Sir Robert Martin, Mrs W. E. May, Commander and Mrs H. P. Mead, Commander R. D. Merriman, Mr C. G. Miller, Sir Alan Moore, Mr G. W. Munro, Miss Ella F. Oswald, Captain C. E. Parkes, Mr F. J. Pateman, Mr J. Foster Petree, Lieut.-Commander A. H. Phillipson, Mr E. A. Philp, Mr M. E. Read, Mr M. W. Richey, Mr Gregory Robinson, Mr Michael Robinson, Mr Brian Robson, Mr R. A. Skelton, Mr A. Smith, Admiral Sir Aubrey Smith, Sublieutenant L. A. Stock, Mrs M. Stuart, Captain Geoffrey G. Thorne, Mr Alan J. Villiers, Mr and Mrs Oliver Warner, Mr E. W. White, Captain A. R. Williamson, Mr J. S. Wilson, Mr and Mrs G. R. G. Worcester, Mr and Mrs G. F. Wright.

Dr R. C. Anderson, President of the Society, introduced the Lecturer, and at the conclusion proposed a hearty vote of thanks to Commander May which was carried with acclamation. Tea was provided in the restaurant of the Museum.

The lecture was illustrated with a number of very interesting lantern slides, and is reported as follows:

THE HISTORY OF THE MAGNETIC COMPASS

By Commander W. E. May, R.N.

The history of the magnetic compass is a long and obscure one, for much of the early history is hidden and no really good account of the development of the instrument has ever appeared. Too many distinguished historians and scientists who have written on the subject have fallen into one or

another of a number of traps, originating in misunderstandings, ignorance or even in deliberate forgery. As an example of the error into which an historian can fall, I may quote the statement that the fact that Columbus records the taking of compass bearings proves that he had a standard compass fitted in a binnacle on the quarter-deck. A study of compass history of two or three centuries later shows that it was usual to use a portable compass for taking bearings and that the fixed standard compass did not come into fashion until about 1820. It is most unlikely that Columbus was 300 years ahead of his time in this respect.

In histories of the compass it is usual to start with the Chinese, and I will do the same, if only to show another way in which the compass historian can fall into a trap. There is a legend that more than 2500 years B.C. a Chinese prince revolted and, when attacked by the emperor, tried to confuse his pursuers by putting down a smoke screen. The emperor, Huang-ti, sent to the head of his army a 'south-pointing chariot', and this led the army through the smoke on a steady course and the rebel was caught and executed. Fifteen hundred years later we again read of these chariots, when five were given by the emperor to some ambassadors from Tonquin, to help them to find their way home. The chariots do not seem to have been of very much use as the ambassadors took over a year to get back to their own country.

The first really detailed information which reached the West concerning China was brought to us in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by Jesuit missionaries. These read of the south-pointing chariots and how each carried the little figure of a man whose outstretched arm always remained pointing to the south, and they immediately jumped to the conclusion that the only way he could have been made to point south was by the use of a magnetic needle. They accordingly boldly asserted that the Chinese knew of the compass long before the Christian era, and historians accepted this view until very recent times. Now, however, it has been proved that these chariots had, in fact, a sort of differential between the two wheels and that by this means the figure was kept pointing constantly in one direction. Presumably the royal garage in Peking faced south and the figures were lined up before they started out. The device could only have worked over very small distances. A little arithmetic will show us that if the chariot had 4 ft. wheels placed 4 ft. apart and one wheel was $\frac{1}{10}$ in. greater diameter than the other, the chariot after covering about 3 miles only, with the figure continuing to point straight ahead, would have circled back to its starting-point. No wonder the ambassadors took a long time to get home if they trusted to this contrivance!

Actually the first authentic report of the use of a compass in China dates

from about A.D. 1100; not very different in time from the first known use in Europe.

In Europe there have been many attempts to prove a very early knowledge of the compass. One man tried to prove that Solomon must have got his gold from Peru, and that since such a voyage was impossible without a compass he must have invented it. Then there are the legends of Abaris, the scientist, who settled in Greece centuries before Christ. He is supposed to have travelled with the aid of a magic arrow. Some say he rode on it, as on a broomstick, but some say that it showed him the way, and if this version is the correct one his arrow might have been a magnetic needle. Some say that Abaris came from the community at Stonehenge, others that he was a Scythian. Scythia is a part of Russia, and it is a commentary on the general ignorance of the history of the compass that, so far, the Russians have overlooked him and have not used his name to prove that the magnetic compass was invented by a Russian.

We have to come to the twelfth century to get any really authentic information about the compass. At that time the subject appears to have been taught in the University of Paris, for we start to hear of compasses from a number of sources which probably originated there. We have the school book written by the Englishman Alexander Neckham, and the satirical poem of Guyot de Provins in which he deplores the fact that the Pope is less constant than the magnetic needle. There are others. There are two particular points about all these references. The compass described consists of a needle thrust through a straw to form a cross and floated by it on water, and was only used to point out the direction of north when there was no other means of determining direction in thick weather. Now, it is generally considered that the first compass must have been a block of lodestone floating on a piece of board, but here we have already reached the second stage of its development where a needle is magnetized by a lodestone and used as the directing agent. This seems to indicate that as the compass had already reached the second stage it cannot have been a very new thing when Neckham wrote about it in 1187.

The fact that the needle was only used in bad weather seems to prove that early navigators relied mainly on the wind for direction. Where they were dealing with regular winds these gave all the direction required, but where winds were variable their direction had to be checked at times by reference to known bearings such as those of the Pole Star and of the sun at sunrise or sunset. The invention of the compass would therefore only be an extension of the normal practice, to determine the direction of the wind when astronomical means were not available. This method of using the compass had two advantages over any attempt to steer by it. The compass had to be used

for only a few moments at a time, and indeed no more was possible, as with a floating compass the element would soon seek the side of the bowl and would cease to point to north. The other advantage was that the compass could be consulted below decks and in secrecy, and thereby the pilot could cash in on the advantages of keeping his methods secret while protecting himself from any fear of an accusation of witchcraft.

Two methods of magnetizing the needle are described. Either the point was simply rubbed against the lodestone or the needle was floated by its straw and the lodestone was then brought up to the side of the bowl. It attracted the needle to it and the lodestone was then moved round and round the bowl, faster and faster, until the needle was following it at quite a high speed. The lodestone was then snatched away and the needle pointed to the north. This second method must have appealed to the man who rather liked a little *hocus pocus*. I was recently challenged to repeat these old methods as described and found that both worked quite well.

The next character whom I wish to introduce to you was a Frenchman, Pierre de Maricourt, otherwise referred to as Petrus Peregrinus. This distinguished scientist wrote a treatise on the whole subject of magnetism and the compass in the year 1269. He describes two compasses, the primitive floating lodestone type, and something new. This is a double-axis compass, namely one in which the needle is carried in a vertical shaft, pivoted top and bottom. It has been suggested that Pierre de Maricourt only wrote as an astronomer and that as he does not mention the nautical use of the compass he knew nothing about it, but I want to draw attention to one feature of his compass. He had a second pin, of non-magnetic material, at right angles to the needle, and the only purpose for this can have been to equalize the moments of inertia in the two vertical planes at right angles to each other. If the needle alone were used in a seaway, it would tend to turn into the plane of the roll and would be valueless. By balancing the needle with a pin at right angles, any tendency to turn into the plane of the roll is avoided. I suggest that as Pierre de Maricourt made such an important point of this balancing pin he intended his compass to be used at sea.

During the next 200 or 300 years we learn little of the progress of the compass. We find isolated mentions of it in the inventories of ships and we know that it changed its form, yet we can find no technical description of it until about 1550. By that time a type had evolved which was to remain in use for a further two centuries. The water had disappeared and the magnet system now rested and pivoted on a pin driven up through the base of the wooden bowl. A need had evidently been felt for some rather more accurate method of judging direction than estimating its relativity to the

direction of the needle, and a graduated card had been attached. The landsman's method of marking the directions in the bowl and turning it until the north point corresponded with the end of the needle was of little use at sea where the ship would be constantly yawing. The balancing of the needle on the pivot presented some trouble until someone hit on the idea of using two needles with sufficient space for the cap between them. It became usual to use a single piece of wire bent into an oval shape to form a pair of needles. In the sixteenth or seventeenth century it was noted that the wider you separated your needles the steadier your compass became, and an arrangement of needles in the form of a lozenge was adopted. We are getting back to the same old point of balancing the needle in two directions at right angles.

The bowl was usually made of wood and the pivot was often only a nail driven through the base. The base was made detachable so that the card could be taken out if the needle required 're-touching'. A detachable top would have allowed rain to leak in. The cap, which rested on the pivot, was merely a hollow cone of brass. A typical compass of the period appears in a contemporary portrait of Lord Clinton and Saye, who was Lord High Admiral in 1562. Gimbals were fitted to keep the compass bowl level, but I am by no means certain that they were always used. The first mention we have of them is about thirty years after the first voyage of Columbus, and while Columbus probably used a compass very similar to that we have just seen there is no evidence whether it was gimballed or not.

In connexion with Columbus's compass there is one very important point. Some years before his voyage the compass makers of North-West Europe had realized that the needle did not point true north but erred by an angle which we now call the variation. To make their compasses true-reading they had formed the habit of attaching the needle askew on the card, so that while the needle pointed to magnetic north the fleur-de-lis on the card indicated true north. Italian makers usually aligned their needles with the fleur-de-lis. On Columbus's second voyage, he used Genoese compasses which showed magnetic, and Flemish compasses which showed true, in Flanders. The two differed by three-quarters of a point and Columbus did not know why. I have a theory that on his first voyage he had used Spanish compasses, whose makers followed the example of those in Flanders in setting their needles askew, but that he did not know it, for he was not the complete master of his profession that he would have had us believe. If this is so, it would go far to explain his otherwise rather obscure remarks about the bearing of the Pole Star.

This setting askew of needles led to all sorts of difficulties if one tried to use a different compass to that for which the chart had been made. It led to

such expedients as the drawing of the oblique second meridian on charts of the American coast, and it led to careful navigators carrying to sea a number of compasses made for various parts of the world. The difficulty was partially surmounted by making the needle adjustable so that the card could be set at any angle to it. The idea caught on in Holland, and was extensively used there even as late as about 1875. In this country it was never popular, though many inventors tried to introduce it. One even managed to bounce Lord Nelson into giving an unwarranted testimonial, and I personally have had the idea put to me by two different inventors during the last ten years.

The wooden compass with its lozenge-shaped needles lasted into the nineteenth century, though in the middle of the eighteenth a new type had appeared.

Dr Gowin Knight was not a very good doctor. He nearly killed his own sister with an overdose of strychnine and she was justifiably annoyed. Though very unlucky over money matters he was always seeking a way of making his fortune. One of his ventures was the making of artificial magnets. At this time compass needles were generally magnetized by stroking them with a lodestone. The other day I came across Admiralty correspondence concerning the provision of a good lodestone for the use of the compass maker at Deptford dockyard in 1728. One or two inventors had done a little towards making artificial magnets, but not commercially. Knight now made a pair of colossal magnetic machines. Each consisted of 240 bars, each 15 in. by 1 in. by $\frac{1}{2}$ in. bound together into a monstrous magnet 5 ft. by 10 in. by 3 in. Although there was considerable demagnetizing effect between the bars, together they made a very much stronger magnet than a single bar would be. He then placed additional bars, one at a time, between the two monsters and so magnetized them stronger than a lodestone could do. These additional bars were then used to replace those already in the machine and so it was built up stronger and stronger. In the end the strength of one of these machines is believed to have reached 750,000 units. This compares with 4200 c.g.s. units which is the strength of the large lodestone in the National Maritime Museum.

No one was allowed to see the machines, and Knight hoped to make a fortune by selling his very strong artificial magnets made by their aid. Unfortunately, he was rather greedy and refused trade terms to his friend John Canton, and Canton, thinking he was being put upon, evolved his own method of making artificial magnets. When he and the Reverend John Mitchel separately published their methods the monopoly was gone. Knight had, however, acquired a reputation as an expert on magnetism, and when the ship *Dover* was struck by lightning and had her compasses deranged, her owners sought his advice. He found that much of her trouble

had been due to a dishonest carpenter who had used iron spikes in the manufacture of the binnacle, but the incident also led Knight to examine the types of compasses which were on the market. He was not impressed by what he found. Many cards settled out of the meridian. Perhaps they had had their needles placed intentionally askew and the Doctor did not realize it. The lozenge-shaped needles were often made of such poor material that one side would become less strongly magnetized than the other, causing errors. The navy had adopted a single needle with a waist, and Knight showed that a needle of this type might acquire as many as six magnetic poles, so dissipating its strength. Knight decided to design a new compass. He took advantage of his great machines to make needles out of flat steel bars, using material which was too hard to have been magnetized by the old methods and which would in consequence retain its magnetism longer. To avoid having to pierce his needle for the cap he placed the needle on top of the card above it, and to prevent the card from being top-heavy balanced it by a brass ring underneath. To reduce friction, which had always been a nuisance when the brass cap rested on a roughly made pivot, he used as a pivot a sewing needle, which could be renewed, and fitted an agate bearing in the cap. Previously an attempt had been made to make the whole cap of agate but this was of course very expensive, and an experiment with glass had been unsatisfactory. Knight's first compasses were made by Smeaton, who afterwards made his name as the builder of the Eddystone lighthouse, and Smeaton made several suggestions as to details.

The new compasses were tried at sea, two of the captains to whom they were sent being Rodney and Howe. They were not entirely successful, but they were so much better made than anything else on the market that the navy and many of the better-found merchant vessels adopted them. Their great fault was that Knight had overlooked our old friend the equalization of the moments of inertia and consequently the card was unsteady at sea. Knight made a summer voyage in the sloop *Fortune*, but was unlucky in striking fine weather and did not hit on the cause of the trouble, and his later design, patented in 1766, shows that he was working on the wrong lines. Cook took one of these later compasses on his first voyage but did not think much of it. Nevertheless, Knight must be remembered as an important figure in the compass world, and his instruments lasted into the next century.

One of the by-ways of compass history is the attempt to use the variation of the compass as a means of measuring the longitude. Columbus on his later voyages roughly measured his progress across the Atlantic by this means. English traders to the East in the early seventeenth century usually recorded their positions by latitude and variation rather than by latitude

and longitude, and variation was often used as a means of determining when the Cape of Good Hope had been rounded. The problem was a twofold one, the need for an accurate variation chart of the world and the need to be able to measure the variation with sufficient accuracy. Edmund Halley, later Astronomer Royal, was sent on a voyage to observe the variation, and though he proved the contrary many men still hoped or imagined that its value at any spot on the earth's surface could be calculated. An accurate means of observing its value would then have been all that was necessary.

It is probable that the longitude idea was at the back of the mind of the inventor of the Azimuth Compass which appeared in the middle of the seventeenth century and which lasted for 100 years. In this compass a large flat ring had to be aligned with the compass card by means of cross-wires. A style, pivoted on the edge of the ring, then enabled the bearing of the sun to be observed, and this could be done with great apparent accuracy as a diagonal graduation enabled the bearing to be read off to a minute of arc. Of course the fallacy of the whole thing was that one was lucky if one lined up the ring to the card within a degree, and any error in alignment appeared in the final result.

In 1793 Ralph Walker, who described himself as a Gentleman of Jamaica, put an idea before the Governor of that island and impressed him sufficiently for a passage to England to be arranged in the *Providence* in which ship the renowned Captain Bligh was returning from his second bread-fruit voyage. Walker's idea was a sun-compass fixed to the top of a magnetic compass. This enabled the error of the compass to be determined with quite remarkable accuracy, provided of course that the sun was shining.

The Admiralty was quite impressed and sent the compass to sea for trial. Murdo Downie, the master of the *Glory*, in his report, pointed out that apart from the fact that the idea of calculating the variation was fallacious, it could not be observed accurately at sea because the compass was affected by the magnetism of the ironwork of the ship. This pronouncement seems to have caused quite a stir, although the fact that the iron could cause an error had been noted as long ago as 1538, and had been commented upon since by more than one writer on navigation. Walker's compass was adopted all the same, for though useless for the purpose for which it had been intended it was much better designed than were the later Knight compasses. One of Knight's later efforts had been to gimbal the compass bowl above the level of the card pivot, and instead of making the card steadier as had been intended this had the opposite effect. Walker corrected this fault and in his later compasses also set the needle on edge instead of flat. One of the troubles with flat needles, which had incidentally also been

pointed out by Murdo Downie, was that the axis of magnetization of the needle was liable to differ from its longitudinal axis and that an error could thus appear.

Although the navy adopted Walker's compasses, they were so expensive that the Admiralty would only issue them to ships in which either the captain or the master could produce a certificate that he had been specially instructed in their use.

The question of compass errors, or deviation, being caused by the iron in the ship was again brought into prominence by Captain Matthew Flinders. This officer, while on a surveying voyage to Australia, discovered apparent anomalies in the compass bearings which he took, and after some examination found that they were systematic and, being dependent on the course and on the latitude, could to a certain extent be foretold. On his way back from Australia he was imprisoned by the Governor of Mauritius and kept there for many years. He succeeded in sending a report to the Royal Society and on his return to England persuaded the Admiralty to carry out experiments. These confirmed his theories, but though a circular was sent to all H.M. ships, very few officers ever seem to have hoisted in its contents. Attention was again drawn to the matter by experiments carried out by Peter Barlow, the mathematical professor at the Royal Military Academy. In 1819 this gentleman produced a plate which was expected to correct the compass, but actually it was only doing the same job as the bar recommended by Flinders, and the increased use of iron in ships was producing errors which Flinders had never had to contend with. Barlow's plate had some success, but it never did all that was claimed for it.

In the 1830's matters became so pressing that the Admiralty had to take action. First they sent Commander Johnson to carry out experiments in the iron steamship *Garry Owen*; then Airy, the Astronomer Royal, to do the same in the *Rainbow*, and finally they appointed a committee to consider the whole problem of compasses and their errors. Airy showed how a ship's magnetism affected the compass and how it could be corrected. Unfortunately, he seems to have jumped to the conclusion that some possible errors were theoretical only, and that no attempt need be made to correct them. The result was that while in some ships the compasses corrected by Airy's instructions gave excellent results, in others the correction was only of use while the ship remained in one locality. This lack of success on some occasions scared the Admiralty Compass Committee and they advised that compasses should be left uncorrected, but that great care should be taken to provide a good position for the compass and that errors should be frequently observed. In spite of the last instruction one finds ships being navigated by deviation tables which had been obtained as much as ten years

before. The Merchant Service, on the other hand, took Airy's scheme to its bosom. No doubt it was much cheaper to correct a compass than to provide a good non-magnetic position for it, and if the correction was not permanent you could always blame the unfortunate adjuster or the captain.

Besides their study of compass correction, the Admiralty Committee designed a new compass which had four needles on edge, placed sufficiently far apart to balance the card and equalize the moments of inertia. It was a very well-designed and well-made compass, but at £25 cost about three times as much as the Admiralty was accustomed to pay. There was opposition to such expenditure in the Royal Navy while few shipowners would think of it. The compass did not, therefore, have as much effect on design as it should have done, though from this time the better makers started using two or more needles with most beneficial results.

In 1855 the Liverpool shipowners set up their own committee which examined Airy's method and proved the necessity of the correctors he had neglected, and as a result compass correction was greatly improved. It was still very inconvenient, however, as binnacles were not designed to accommodate correctors and these had to be attached individually to their sides or to the deck. Lecky tells a delightful story of a captain who fitted a Flinders bar which had to be rather long as he had placed it at a considerable distance from the compass. The result was that to make it long enough he had to take the end down through the deck, where it penetrated into the mate's bunk and caused him very natural annoyance.

By 1870 matters in the compass world were becoming pretty desperate. Many of the cheaper compasses had still only one needle which was unsteady in a seaway, and to prevent it oscillating excessively some men used to fill the cap with brick-dust to act as a brake. Dent even introduced actual card-brakes in some of his compasses. The heavy cards blunted the pivots and deviations were becoming larger and more difficult to correct because of the increased amount of iron used in shipbuilding.

Sir William Thomson, afterwards Lord Kelvin, set himself to solve the problem of compass correction and designed a binnacle which could take all the correctors needed. It must be made perfectly clear that the compass which he designed and for which he has been almost universally applauded was originally intended as a mere adjunct to his binnacle and that its design was primarily undertaken because the 'experts' said that a compass could never be corrected properly because of the magnetic induction set up in the soft iron correctors by the compass needles. His chief aim was, therefore, to produce a compass which would work in spite of having weak needles. The principal points of design in the Thomson compass card are its lightness, the weakness of its needles, the lack of friction and easy renewability

of caps and pivots and the long period of oscillation. Sir William has, at one time or another, been acclaimed for having originated all these features, but if we examine them we find that light cards were first recommended during the reign of Queen Elizabeth; that the lack of friction is produced by this lightness and by the ability to change caps and pivots as had been done by Dr Knight and in the Admiralty compass of 1842; that the method of ensuring a long period by giving the card a heavy rim had been patented by Lamont; even light weak needles had been introduced by Lous in 1772 and used in the Danish Navy and had been patented by Paget a few years before Thomson. It is true that Thomson put all these advantages together for the first time, and produced a workmanlike compass, but I have recently been informed that a card on very similar lines had been suggested and made experimentally by Wiggins some years earlier.

Thomson's compass had a great success which can be attributed to a number of factors. First, he refused to sell either compass or binnacle separately, with the result that his corrected compass was compared with an uncorrected one. Of course his compass gave better results every time. Secondly, his wealth and position and the prestige of his name enabled him to advertise as no compass had ever been advertised before, and to take legal action against anyone who endeavoured to make a compass conforming to any of the old well-known principles on which his compass was designed. These patent cases make curious reading. In one, Thomson brought as an expert witness a man who when asked his opinion on one point said in effect 'I know it is so because Sir William says so'; and he got away with it. On another occasion Thomson was able to get an injunction to prevent the use of a patent of an earlier date than his own. Lastly, times had changed since 1842, and shipowners were much more inclined to spend money on fitting their ships well than they had been when the Admiralty Standard Compass had been introduced. Excellent as the Thomson compass was, one adverse factor to its use was already looming on the horizon, the increase in the speed of ships. Speed often meant vibration and vibration is the enemy of the Thomson light card. There is even a known case of a ship in which the note of her syren was sufficient to start the pivot vibrating and the card spinning on it as a juggler spins a plate on a billiard cue. It was found that the Thomson card had to be supported on carefully designed anti-vibrational mountings and these alone saved the compass from an early death.

A rival to the Thomson compass was already appearing. I refer to the liquid compass. It will be remembered that in the early compass the needle system floated on water and that this was discarded in favour of the pivot. There is a tale that one day, in about 1800, the glass of a compass was

broken in heavy weather and the sea poured into the bowl and the officers noticed that immediately the violent swinging of the card was calmed. Between 1770 and 1800 two or three attempts were made to make pivoted compasses filled with water but the idea did not catch on, and I have so far been unable to trace any detailed records of these early trials. In 1813, a Kentish watchmaker named Crow designed a compass entirely filled with liquid in which the card was fitted with a float so that instead of resting on a pivot it floated up against a pivot pointing downwards from the glass. Expansion of the liquid was allowed for by having a leather bottom to the bowl. With the exception of the superimposed pivot Crow's compass contains all the features of a modern liquid compass, but it did not have any success. Perhaps the defects of the leather bottom made it leak; perhaps the interior became quickly discoloured by the action of impure water and poor quality paint; perhaps the small size of the card compared with the normal 6 in. diameter made it unpopular. Still, it must be remembered as a remarkable achievement.

Other attempts at liquid compasses followed. As early as 1810 they were being sold by the firm of Weilbach of Copenhagen and about 1830 Grant Preston produced a liquid compass in England. Both these were fitted with small reservoirs above the bowl to keep it full, however much the liquid expanded or contracted with change of temperature. By 1845 the Royal Navy had already found that its new compasses were inclined to be unsteady in bad weather, and liquid compasses were being supplied to all ships as steering compasses to be shipped when the vessel was rolling heavily.

Somewhere about 1862 an American named Samuel Ritchie visited this country and became extremely interested in a liquid compass which he saw. Perhaps it was an instrument of Crow's. I think that this is more probable than that it was Grant Preston's. He went home and designed a most efficient compass which was adopted by the American Navy and given a trial in the French; but the British Admiralty would not look at it. The Superintendent of the Compass Department told Ritchie that British compasses were satisfactory and that anyhow there was no money to make a change. In Ritchie's first compass, as in Crow's, the needles were inside the float. The needles consisted of bundles of fine steel wires. Later the float became smaller and the needles emerged outside it.

When the Thomson compass came on the market it was at first tried privately by his friends in the Royal Navy. Considerable pressure was brought to bear, and in 1889 the compass was adopted as the service pattern against the advice of the Compass Department, who had realized that the liquid compass was the compass of the future for steam vessels. When the Board decided to adopt the Thomson compass someone suggested as an

afterthought that it might be as well to inform the Compass Department which was responsible for the provision of compasses.

The Department loyally tried to use the Thomson compass but from the first it could not be used in torpedo-boats, where the excessive vibration made a liquid compass a necessity. Liquid compasses were gradually perfected for this service, one of the principal improvements being to revert to Crow's example and reduce the diameter of the card relative to the bowl. The advantage of a comparatively small card is that it is less affected by swirl set up in the liquid, as the ship yaws or alters course rapidly, than is one which fits the bowl fairly closely. Finally, in 1906, approval was given for the liquid compass to become the compass of the navy. This does not mean that the Thomson disappeared immediately. At Zeebrugge, in 1918, the *Vindictive* still used a Thomson compass.

In the Merchant Service one effect of the Thomson compass was to produce a slight boom in liquid compass manufacture. Makers who had been prevented by Sir William from manufacturing light dry card compasses turned to liquid instead. Some of the smaller makers probably did little good except to advertise the Thomson, for their liquid compasses were often badly designed and badly made. It must be emphasized that a liquid compass must be well made. Otherwise the card sticks on its pivot or the bowl leaks or becomes discoloured.

I have come to the end of my history. I have not touched on aircraft compasses or any of the other types which have not a marine use. Neither have I tackled the many kinds of magnetic compasses which are now made to work repeaters to indicate the direction of the ship's head in far-away parts of the ship. These form separate subjects which, with the many freaks which have appeared, are outside the scope of this lecture.

NOTES

THE DATING OF 'THE DUKE OF YORK'S
SUPPLEMENTARY ORDERS, 1672'

When compiling the Fighting Instructions of the Third Dutch War, Corbett followed Sir Edward Spragge's 'Order Book' in the Dartmouth MSS. for his text¹ of 'the Duke of York's Supplementary Orders, 1672'. These orders comprised the two celebrated 'Further Instructions for Fighting':

1. 'To keep the enemy to leeward' (bearing down at full length conterminously on the enemy's line),

2. 'To divide the enemy's fleet' (cutting off a part of it and containing the rest);

with the added injunction to commanders to keep the line, and upon pain of death not to fire over their own ships.

Corbett, like subsequent commentators, admitted the possibility 'that their origin, at least in design, went back to the close of the Second (Dutch) War', and that the second Instruction 'seems almost certainly to have been suggested by the tactics of Monck and Rupert on the last day of the Four Days' Battle, June 4 1666'... 'the first time, so far as is known, that the principle of containing was ever enunciated'. Nevertheless, he held it 'practically certain they must have been later than August 1672'.²

Corbett's difficulties were increased, however, when he noted that in another volume of Lord Dartmouth's collection, the self-styled 'Royal Charles Sea-book', these orders appeared on the back of a leaf (the last in the volume) which bore some 'Sailing Instructions of the Duke of York' dated 16 November 1666; and moreover that they were there headed 'Additional Instructions to be observed in the next engagement', as though they had been the outcome of a previous action. But what 'next engagement' could Spragge be at that date foreseeing? The November date, even if otherwise acceptable, is nearly four months after the 'St James's Fight' of 25 July, which was the last such action of that war. Corbett concluded that 'it is fairly clear we must regard these remarkable Orders as resulting from the experience of the Second War and as having been put into force during the Third one'. Certainly, his argument ran, since in the second Spragge sea-book they bear Matthew Wren's countersignature, they could not have been promulgated in written form earlier than September 1667 when, a full month after the peace, Wren became the Lord Admiral's secretary.

This inference in its turn served the more to discredit Granville Penn,³ who by implication merged them with James's Instructions of April 1665, and referred to their official issue 'afterwards' in one of two complete sets of Instructions: Penn, wrote Corbett, 'has thereby left an unfortunate impression, . . . that they were used in the campaign of 1666, that is, in the Second Dutch War'.

Now among the naval papers of Sir William Coventry (secretary 1660-7 to the Duke of York as Lord High Admiral, and additional Navy Commissioner 1662-7), at Longleat, are scattered a few abstracts of his own notes on fighting and sailing orders, taken at councils of war 1664-7. One of these,⁴ endorsed 'About signalls in times of fights at sea', has some bearing on our difficulty. The greater part of this abstract is unremarkable, being merely Coventry's notes of the respects in which earlier fighting and sailing orders (i.e. those of 1653) had been modified and supplemented in November 1664 and in April 1665. The final entry, however, claims greater attention: for Coventry continues,

'July 18th ('66). P. Rupert and D. of Alb. added instructions the first whereof was' and then follows the first of the so-called Further Instructions of 1672 ('In case wee have the

1 *N.R.S.* Vol. xxix, pp. 148-9.

3 *Memorials of Sir William Penn*, Vol. II, App. L.

4 *Coventry Papers*, Vol. xcv, ff. 230-1.

2 *Ibid.* p. 136 *et seq.*

wind of the enemy' . . . etc.) in its entirety, and in wording virtually identical with Corbett's text. Coventry's manuscript then breaks off, three or four inches from the foot of the page, and no further order is added to justify the use of the plural ('instructions') in his heading.

Coventry's note prompts some reflections. First: we may assume the reliability of the Lord Admiral's secretary. Have we here, then, the earliest-dated written record of this order?

Secondly, the new date is exactly a week before the St James's Fight. If we accept it as the date of promulgation, is it not now easier to understand Spragge's 'next engagement' as one envisaged that same summer, and not in some indefinite future war? And is not Granville Penn thereby absolved from the more serious consequences of having misled his readers?

Thirdly, the events of 4 June are generally held to have inspired the second order rather than the first, the *melée*-ist Instruction (to use Prof. Lewis's distinction)¹ rather than the formalist's. Is it an unjustified conjecture that, had Coventry gone on to complete his transcription to satisfy the plurality of its heading, the substance of the second order would have complemented the first?

Naval tacticians may dispute whether the Further Instructions were put into practice in the St James's Fight (or indeed ever subsequently in the century). But to assign their formulation and promulgation to a date before, and not after, that action, is to move in the direction where the new evidence points.

V. VALE

THE LUBBER'S POINT

The earliest description in English of the Lubber's Point that I have been able to trace is contained in Edward Wright's *Certain Errors in Navigation* (2nd ed., London, 1610). The first part of this work is devoted to the mathematical solution of Mercator's projection and to the rectification of other errors besides those of hydrography. The second part contains the translation, by a friend of Wright's, of a Spanish manual of navigation. He included it because, he declared, 'the rules and principles of that Art . . . I have not hitherto knowne to be more briefly and plainly, nor yet more fully set downe and published in any other booke.' The book he referred to was *Compendio del arte de navegar, del Licenciado Rodrigo Çamorano* (Impresso en Savilla, Año. 1588), with a dedication to King Philip II of Spain dated 22 September 1584. The first edition of this work was *Compendio de la arte de navegar, de Rodrigo Çamorano* (en Sevilla, Año. 1581). Except for the dedication and slightly changed title the text of the two editions is the same. A diagram of the division of the horizon into the 32 rhumbs of the winds, contained in the first edition, has been replaced in the 1588 ed. by a wood-cut of a compass fly.

The translation in *Certain Errors* is as follows:

Chap. xvii

Of the Sea Compasse

The Sea Compasse is one of the most necessarie instruments which are used in Navigation for day and night, in cleere and darke weather it sheweth alwaies the right way through the sea . . . the manner of making it is . . . [a description of the fly; the needle (offset $\frac{1}{2}$ point N.E. to allow for the N. Easting of the Compass at Seville); 'the capitell'; and 'the pinne', follows]. This pinne must be . . . fastened upright in a round box of wood . . . within two hoopes of latin . . . fastened within a square box, or a round, so as although the uttermost box be tossed up and downe every way with the motion of the shippe, yet alwaies the superficies and glasse of the inner box may lie level with the Horizon . . . being placed with the box in the midst of the pup of the ship where the bittacle standeth in a right line, which passeth from the bolt-sprit by the midst of the maine-mast to the puppe, it serveth continually to governe the ship by moving of the rudder, till the winde or the line of your compasse, towards which we desire to shape our course, stand directly towards the prow or bolt-sprit of the ship. They use also at night to marke a point within the inner part of the inner box, which in respect of the capitell of the compasse may stand directly towards the prow of the ship. And alwaies in guiding the shippe, you must take heed that the said point be continually joyned with the winde of the rose towards which you intend your course.

¹ *The Navy of Britain* (1949), p. 463.

The original Spanish relating to the lubber's point reads:

De la Aguja de Marear, Cap. 17, p. 35

... Suclese tambien para noche señalar vn punto en el mortero por la parte de dentro, que respecto del chapitel de la Aguja, esté hazia la proa dela nao: y enel gobernar se tiene cuenta que el tal punto esté siempre pegado con el viento de la rosa hazia donde se navega.

Thus the lubber's point can be traced, though not by name, as far back as 1581 in Spanish compasses and by inference to at least a generation earlier.

Martin Cortes in his *Arte de Navegar* of 1551 (written in 1545) describes the making of a sea-compass in great detail, but makes no mention of a lubber's point. This manual was translated by Richard Eden on Stephen Borough's recommendation and published in London in 1561. It was the first manual of navigation in English. Bourne, who supplemented it with his *Regiment of the Sea* (London, 1574), made no mention of a lubber's point. These two works went through several editions, the last one of Bourne's appearing in 1631, of Cortes's in 1630. Neither Norman in *The New Attractive* of 1581, nor William Borough in his accompanying pamphlet on variation mentions a lubber's point, nor does Blundeville in his *Exercises* of 1594; nor Davis in the *Seaman's Secrets* of 1595; nor Barlow in *The Navigators Supply* of 1597, a work in which he treats at length of the mariner's compass; nor Polter in *The Pathway to Perfect Sailing*, 1605.

In sailing ships of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when it was customary to set a course to the nearest quarter of a rhumb and for the helmsman to steer it by checking his compass with the masts or bowsprit, the need for a lubber's point was felt only when night sailing was practised in largish ships. It is unlikely therefore that in Spanish compasses a lubber's point came into use before the 1560's and in English ones before the 1570's.

Medina's *Arte de Navegar* of 1545 was translated by John Frampton in 1581, reprinted in 1595. I know of no copies in England and I have been unable to find the opportunity to consult the Spanish, French and Italian versions in the British Museum. Other Spanish manuals published between 1545 and 1580 I have also been unable to consult.

To conclude. In my opinion the need for a lubber's point was caused by the practice of oceanic sailing in largish ships by night as well as by day. It was not until the 1570's that English seamen became sufficiently conversant with the problems of oceanic navigation and the mysteries of the art of navigation for them to practise oceanic navigation in numbers and, to an increasing extent, independently of Portuguese, Spanish, French or Italian pilots. (Drake and Hawkins on their fatal voyage to the West Indies in 1595-6 took two Portuguese pilots with them.) The English received their initiation into the art of navigation at the hands of French navigators in Henry VIII's reign; of Italian, Portuguese and Spanish ones in Edward VI's and Mary's reigns; and of French, Portuguese and Spanish ones in Elizabeth's. All these nations were regularly practising oceanic navigation years before the English and as the lubber's point can be identified as early as 1581 in a Spanish navigation manual it is highly probable that it was originated by Spanish, French or Portuguese navigators. It is not mentioned in one of the two most authoritative Spanish manuals of the 1540's and 1550's; it may be in other Spanish manuals published between 1545 and 1580. It may be mentioned in the French edition of Medina's work of 1545. As the French and the Spanish learnt their navigation from the Portuguese and as the Portuguese had been practising oceanic navigation for many years before either the Spanish or the French, the lubber's point was probably a Portuguese innovation. Portuguese manuals of navigation, on which I am no authority, may enable the period, if not the exact date, at which it was introduced, to be determined more precisely. The increased size of ships undoubtedly had much to do with the need for a lubber's point, a fact which adds to the probability of its being a Portuguese device of the sixteenth century, say of the 1520's to 1540's.

D. W. WATERS

THE FIGURE-HEAD OF THE *PRINCE ROYAL*, 1610

The famous Jacobean ship *Prince Royal*, built by Phineas Pett in 1610, has justifiably received much attention in the pages of the *M.M.*, particularly in the series of articles in Vol. III by Dr R. C. Anderson. In fact, it is largely due to his discerning eye that we owe so much of the mass of information now available on this ship.

However, there still remains at least one doubtful point connected with her, and I do not recollect having seen any new information in subsequent volumes of the *M.M.*, either by Dr Anderson or any other writer, which solved the problem.

In his article in Vol. vi (p. 366), Dr Anderson doubted the authenticity of the 'colossal head abaft the figure-head', suggesting that it was a piece of artistic licence on the part of the artist, Hendrick Cornelis Vroom. The painting in question is the well-known 'Arrival of the Elector of the Rhine Palatinate, with his Bride, Princess Elizabeth of England, at Flushing, 1613, in the ship *Prince Royal*'. Now Vroom always gives one the impression of being a particular, painstaking and reliable artist, and not at all one who would take liberties, artistic or otherwise. Dr Anderson certainly looked upon him as a reliable guide (p. 367 of the same article), and one can sense his puzzled disappointment at having to record this apparent blot on Vroom's copybook.

Despite everything, I have always hoped that this doubtful addition to the prow of the *Prince Royal* was a real fact, if only to add still further to the many interests of a most fascinating ship. Therefore, for the sake of Vroom's reputation and in an endeavour to clear up one doubtful item about this ship, I venture to suggest the following theory: that Vroom did paint what he saw and that the over-proportioned Crowned Helmet abaft the figure-head proper was added to the beakhead rail for this one voyage only as a compliment to the very important passenger and his bride.

On p. 144 of Miss Carola Oman's life of the 'Winter Queen' is shown the coat-of-arms of the Palatinate Elector, Princess Elizabeth, and Bohemia, impaling the arms of Great Britain. The important feature is the crown over the arms, and borne by the lion supporters. All three are to the same pattern and all three have the same design orb finial, incorporating what is, I believe, a cross moline.

Opposite p. 68 of *Old Figureheads and Sterns* (L. G. Carr Laughton) is shown a coloured illustration of the *Prince Royal*'s figure-head by Cecil King, either sketched from the original painting or drawn from a satisfactorily clear photograph of the detail. Its inclusion in this erudite volume must give it authenticity and therefore one is safe in using it for purposes of comparison.

Compare the crown of this drawing with that of the coat-of-arms, and a more than striking similarity is at once apparent; the dominating orb and foliated modelling above the rim are similar in both illustrations. (A closer inspection of Vroom's painting might confirm that the orb of the crown does carry a cross moline.)

Now I admit this one alleged similarity is not sufficient in itself for the substantiation of the theory. However, there are other factors to be considered. In the same article on the *Prince Royal* Dr Anderson compared several versions of the same ship by Willaerts, Wieringen and Vroom, and in earlier articles (*M.M.*, Vol. III) drew attention to two paintings by Vroom showing the return of Prince Charles from Spain in 1623. Now in all these paintings, which portray the ship at various dates in her existence, no figure-head is depicted other than the 'St George and Dragon' specified in the builder's scheme of decoration (*Autobiography of Phineas Pett*, N.R.S., Vol. LI) with the solitary exception of Vroom's portrayal of the arrival at Flushing. The same artist's later painting of the return from Spain follows the pattern of the other artists in not showing the unusual feature of the earlier painting.

Did we know that Vroom actually saw the squadron's return from Spain, to my mind, the matter would be settled. Lacking information on this point, I can only assume that the composition was made from information supplied. Vroom's particular penchant for accuracy and detail would demand full information; surely, therefore, such an unusual addition to the figure-head would have been mentioned if in fact it had at that time been *in situ*. Consequently, it is reasonable to assume that it was not so, and accordingly is not shown.

Dr Anderson has already cast doubts on the possibility of Willaert's painting of the departure from Margate having been painted from 'life', suggesting that he composed it from information supplied. Wieringen's arrival at Flushing is also under a cloud, due principally to the obvious inaccuracies of the quarter-galleries. However, both have one important thing in common. The 'George and Dragon' figure-head is depicted in an uncomfortable situation on the top of the beakhead rail in the case of Wieringen, and similarly so in Willaert's painting. Is it too wild

a flight of imagination to suggest that both artists were supplied with information for their paintings without actually seeing the ships; that when the figure-head was being described they failed to understand that an addition to the figure-head had been placed above the rail, seized on the more readily understandable 'George and Dragon', remembered that particular mention had been made of 'on top of the beakhead rail', and depicted it accordingly.

The reproduction of Wieringen's painting (*M.M.*, Vol. vi, p. 368) is too indistinct to allow of a close study of the beakheads of the two ships astern of the *Prince Royal*, but certainly the Dutch yacht in the centre foreground has a figure-head located exactly as the more particular Vroom himself portrays, proof that Wieringen could correctly interpret information on more normal practice.

Reverting to the copy by Cecil King of Vroom's detail, the crown shown is such a one as likely to be worn by a German Elector, and the helmet is of the type usually associated in Heraldry with princelings and nobles. The placing of such an ornament in the forefront of his ship has all the marks of a pretty compliment to Frederick and it is a readily understandable one bearing in mind the importance of the occasion. What more natural than a large-size representation of the heraldic device indicative of his status in the courts of Europe, the whole surmounted by a crown which in all probability was a replica of that worn by him at his wedding, which in turn would almost certainly be of the pattern shown on his own coat-of-arms.

Furthermore, we have Phineas Pett's own words for it that he had authority to put all the ships of the squadron in a state of order commensurate with the occasion. 'About the 14th of this month (March) the Lord Admiral, very careful to have all things ordered as befitted the Royalty of such a service, came down to Chatham in person, where he stayed two days to direct all things according to his liking; wherein I gave his Lordship much satisfaction' (*Autobiography of Phineas Pett*, N.R.S., Vol. LI, p. 104). A man who had grossly overspent on the decoration of this ship during building would not think twice about the expense of an unique addition to the beakhead decorations for this royal occasion, especially when he had his patron's own authority for such expense. Pett's laconic wording justifies the interpretation that in effect the Lord Admiral gave Pett a free hand on this occasion, knowing full well he would reap the reward of any credit derived from Pett's handiwork. Pett would be only too glad to have such an opportunity of bedizening the ships and to bask in the reflected glory of his creation's splendid appearance.

In conclusion, I think my theory of the sole depicted existence of the *Prince Royal's* figure-head addition has some concrete facts to lend it colour and support, and whether that theory is accepted or rejected as not feasible, by other members of the Society, at least it may start a new train of thought, with a possible permanent solution of the problem. If the foregoing theory happens to be correct, the brief existence of the effigy bears a strange relation to the brief period during which Frederick wore the crown of Bohemia.

H. C. ARROWSMITH

THREE JACOBAN WARSHIPS

In the *M.M.*, April 1951, Dr Oscar Parkes suggested that Vroom had slipped up in his well-known painting of the arrival of the *Prince Royal* at Flushing, 1613, in showing the initials 'H.R.' instead of 'J.R.' on the *Repulse*. Was it a mistake? Might not a long-standing 'red-herring' have been laid across the trail by the interpretation of the cypher 'H.P.' on the *Prince Royal* as referring to Henry, Prince of Wales? Might not the last letter only be applicable? This has led Dr Parkes to explain the 'H.R.' on the *Red Lion* as having a tenuous connexion with Henry VIII's *Lion* of 1536.

Instead, could it not be that on all his ships James I used the cypher 'H.R.' and that the *Prince Royal* was the exception to the rule, as a compliment to the heir to the throne? Being marooned in the depths of the Midlands I am unable to pursue this theme very much further, but if all paintings and drawings of Jacobean ships could be inspected, we might find confirmation of this common use of the initials 'H.R.'

Is there any evidence that 'J.R.' was ever used? The correspondence regarding the *Convertive* seemed at first to quash my theory, but Dr Anderson (*M.M.*, Vol. 37, p. 166) came to the rescue

by referring to the 'J.' as a possible 'I.' and the 'R.' as a squiggle. In other words, 'H.R.' could just as well have been intended.

It must be remembered that James was a Latin scholar of some repute, and it is quite feasible he had his own particular reasons for adopting 'H.R.' instead of the more obvious 'J.R.' as his cypher. Bursting with pride at his accession to the English throne, I cannot see James divesting himself of one title of his new-found dignity and most unlikely to adopt a cypher on the grounds of some distant connexion with the long-dead Henry VIII. Elizabeth adopted the cypher 'E.R.' and the two Charles 'C.R.'; why, therefore, should James be an exception to the rule and select a cypher not peculiarly his own?

On the contrary, I suggest he did so choose a cypher peculiarly his own and that the cypher was 'H.R.'. The problem is the justification of the use of the first letter, and I must confess that so far, despite enquiries of the Royal Library of Scotland, the British Museum, and the College of Arms, I have failed to ascertain any reason or justification for its use. All say he used 'J.R.' and yet we have the evidence of 'H.R.' on his ships.

I understand the letters 'H' and 'J' were frequently interchanged in latinized forms of Christian names, e.g. Jerome came from, or became, Hieronymus. Is it possible that James adopted a then usual, but now archaic, version of his name which permitted the use of the initial 'H'. I am bound to record that on his coronation medal James used the normal Latin version of his name, 'Jacobus', but this may have been conformation to established rules.

The 'H' cannot stand for another Christian name as James only had the one. One possibility is that it is a Latin version of a Scots name personally applicable to James as a King of Scotland. Perhaps some member north of the Border may be able to throw more light on the subject. The undoubted fact remains that the cypher 'H.R.' is well portrayed and obviously there must be a sound reason for its existence.

H. C. ARROWSMITH

QUEEN VICTORIA'S FUNERAL

The serge-lined monkey coat was only an optional article of uniform, and I do not suppose one man in twenty ever possessed one. So far as I remember this garment was never worn except when on leave.

A. MACDERMOTT

H.M.S. *ANGLIA*

Commander Mandley is to be congratulated on the accuracy of his guess at the identity of 'H.M.S. *Anglia*', but he could have penetrated the 'disguise by pseudonyms' of which he complains with very little difficulty. *Reminiscences of a Midshipman's Life*, quoted by Commander Fardell, was written by Captain Cecil Sloane-Stanley, R.N., although, following the example of Captain Marryat in *Frank Mildmay*, he calls himself in it 'Cyril Rockleigh', and doubtless with the object of being able to give candid portraits of his shipmates without offence, he uses pseudonyms both for them and for the ships that he mentions. The Navy List in the 1850's did not give the names of midshipmen in ships, but Captain Sloane-Stanley's passing certificate would reveal that he served for most, if not all, of his midshipman's time in the *Albion*. The Navy List for that period does, as Commander Mandley guesses, record that the *Albion's* captain was William J. H. Johnstone, relieved on 2 July 1852 by Captain Stephen Lushington. It was Lushington who ordered the hands to be piped to dance and skylark.

Captain Sloane-Stanley's book, which was published posthumously in the 1890's, was popular and ran into several editions. My own copy, given to me when I was a cadet in the *Britannia*, is the 3rd edition, published in 1893. I am not familiar with Mr Walter Wood's *The Battleship* mentioned by Commander Mandley, but if he is accurate in dating it as 'early in the present century', it would seem that Mr Wood must have borrowed Captain Sloane-Stanley's pseudonyms of a decade earlier.

Mr C. S. Stanley, as he was then styled, became a mate in 1876.

H. G. T.

AN EARLY FORM OF SEA ANCHOR

With reference to the *M.M.*, February 1952, pp. 68-9.

I suggest to R. H. D. that a study of depths off-shore at the landing places referred to may offer a solution to other uses for sand bag anchors. If the water were too deep to anchor with equipment carried, a bag of sand would hold a light draught vessel up to the wind and could be handled with the minimum of noise, eliminating the use of a creaking wooden windlass. I used a similar method, a concrete sinker on a long line to hold position offshore in 120 fms. in the Timor Sea to effect dawn landings without noise.

It is also an old trick to carry an anchor under the forefoot when running into shoal water especially at night, to give ample warning and bring your ship to before grounding. A sand bag anchor would be useful and would not pierce the hull, a danger always present with flukes or stone anchors.

The loss of an anchor, a very valuable aid in days of sail, would be avoided. I. MACROBERT

THE THREE L'S

C. J. M. in his review of *Imago Mundi* refers to the traditional three L's, Lead, Latitude and Look-out. In my young days we were always taught when approaching land to remember the three L's, Lead, Log and Look-out, which are much more appropriate as any pilot will agree.

A. MACDERMOTT

THE FIGHTING SHIP FROM 1860 TO 1890

The late Admiral Ballard's fascinating article on this subject in the *M.M.*, February 1952 prompts one or two comments. He mentions the Spanish warship *Numancia*. May one express the hope, now that a translation has just appeared of one of the works of the great Spanish novelist Perez Galdós, that an English edition may soon be available of one of Europe's great sea stories, the same author's *La Vuelta al Mundo en la 'Numancia'* (*The Voyage Round the World in the 'Numancia'*), in which Perez Galdós follows up his magnificent descriptions in his *Trafalgar* of the *Santisima Trinidad*, and her fate at Trafalgar, with an equally detailed account of the Toulon-built 'wonder ship', the *Numancia*, and her exploits under the able Admiral Mendez Nuñez in the futile Hispano-Peruvian War of 1865-6?

Admiral Joubert (*La Marine Française*, p. 422) claims for the French also, through the naval architect Bussy, the credit for having built the first steel battleship, the *Redoutable* of 1872, of which there is an illustration with accompanying note in the third issue for 1951 of the French equivalent of our *Journal*, *Neptunia*. Incidentally, in 1872, the Russians launched the *Peter Veliky*, of 9665 tons, the largest turret battleship till then built. F. T. Jane, in his *Imperial Russian Navy*, gives details of the *Popoff* and other Russian ships mentioned by Admiral Ballard, and the facts given by him seem to contradict both the Admiral's suggestion that there was a long shipbuilding holiday in Russia before the late 1880's, and his assertion that Italy led the world in cruiser construction at that time. Jane credits Russia with the invention of the armoured cruiser.

In connexion with the preceding, I think it is a pity that Admiral Ballard had not space to mention the influence of the naval wars in Chilean and Peruvian waters (a veteran of which still survives in the Chilean Navy), in the Black Sea when the future Admiral Makarov was experimenting with torpedoes as early as 1878, and in Chinese waters, where the French used them successfully under Admiral Courbet in 1884. All three considerably influenced the acrimonious discussions of the time about ship-design and tactics. At one time, about 1890, by the way, the Chilean Navy was in the world's first half-dozen, for size, and also experience.

There were three of the 'pontoon shaped vessels', as Admiral Ballard describes the iron-clad ships built by the French to attack forts in the Crimean War, the *Dévastation*, *Lave* and *Tonnante*. For a very fine description of the ships of the last French and British fleets before the arrival of the iron warship, and of the contrasting views of the two admiralities, I recommend *H.M.S. 'Hannibal' at Palermo and Naples* by Rear-Admiral Sir Rodney Mundy, which is an account of what that officer saw in the Mediterranean when in command of the British fleet there during the Franco-Austrian war of 1859 and the subsequent Garibaldian revolution. J. E. DE COURCY IRELAND

NICHOLAS TOMLINSON IN RUSSIA

Nicholas Tomlinson, whose correspondence forms the last section of *The Tomlinson Papers* (Navy Records Society, 1935), 'is said to have been for a few years in the Russian navy and to have had command of a Russian ship of the line'. This is how it appears in the *Dictionary of National Biography*; while Mr Bullocke's introduction to the N.R.S. volume says that 'he joined the Imperial Russian Navy, apparently having command of a line-of-battle ship'.

The ultimate authority for these statements is presumably the Memoir published in *The Naval Chronicle* (vol. 25). This reads as follows: 'At the special request of the late Lord Hawke... he was recommended by... the Russian Ambassador to the Court of St Petersburg and immediately ordered by the Empress Catherine to be appointed a captain of one of her line-of-battle ships.' Marshall puts it rather more strongly by saying that 'he obtained the command of a ship of the line belonging to the Imperial Navy', and O'Byrne repeats this word for word.

It is quite certain that Tomlinson was not in the Russian navy 'for a few years', because he was back in England soon enough to be appointed to the *Regulus* in July 1793 and had only joined the Russian service in August 1792. This is recorded in *Materials for the History of the Russian Fleet* (vol. 14) as follows: 'July 30 (Aug. 10) 1792. Lieutenant Tomlinson of the English service to be admitted to the fleet as Captain-Lieutenant.' This is the only mention of him in a volume which contains full lists of ships in commission and their captains for 1792 and 1793; it seems more than doubtful that he ever commanded a Russian ship.

The Tomlinson Papers include two letters of 1817/18 addressed to Nicholas Tomlinson by Vice-Admiral Robert Crown (Russian sources give his first name as Roman) who joined the Russian service as lieutenant in 1788. These are written in a manner which suggests that the two men had been at one time intimate friends. They do not appear to have been shipmates in the Royal Navy, but may have been so in the Russian. Crown was serving in the Black Sea fleet in 1792, but there is no mention of Tomlinson there; in any case Crown would certainly have been captain of the ship, not Tomlinson.

R. C. ANDERSON

CALLING THE SOUNDINGS

With reference to the *M.M.* for February 1952, p. 77 (review of *Manual of Seamanship*), Captain Boyd's *Manual for Naval Cadets* (1857, 1864, etc.) gives 'mark seven' and 'deep six' as correct. On the other hand, Burney's *Young Seaman's Manual* (1871, etc.), Nares's *Seamanship*, 6th ed. 1886, and Admiralty *Manual of Seamanship*, vol. 1, 1922, 1926, all give 'By the deep six, nine, etc.' as the proper call for the leadsman. *A Naval Encyclopaedia* (American, Hammersly, 1881, 1891) gives also 'By the deep' and 'By the mark'.

Yet in the 1890's and later, any leadsman who called 'By the deep' would have been sharply rebuked by an officer and ridiculed by his comrades.

A. MACDERMOTT

'DESTINED VOYAGE' IN EARLY REGISTERS

Many writers, quoting from early *Lloyd's* and other registers, quite literally quote the column headed 'destined voyage'. The key to the register clearly shows that the first named port, invariably abbreviated, is the surveying port. Thus it would appear that this is not necessarily the port of departure.

GRAHAME FARR

CAPTAIN COOK'S WIFE

James Cook married Elizabeth Batts at Barking on 21 December 1762, when she was 21 years old, namely 14 years younger than her husband. She died at the age of 93 in 1835. None of Cook's biographers appears to have noticed the following passage in C. R. Leslie's life of Constable the painter (1951 ed., p. 223): Constable to Leslie, June 1833: 'When Captain Cook stood sponsor for a little girl in Barking church, he said "If this infant lives, I will marry her"; he fulfilled his promise, and she was living until lately.' In Laughton's article on Cook in the *D.N.B.*

he refers to the story, but he makes Cook her godfather (which is not necessarily the case) and gives no reference. He dismisses it on the grounds that at the age of 14 Cook must either have been in the village shop, or on board a North Sea collier. Can any reader give another contemporary source?

As Cook's ships traded with London, and as Mrs Cook's family was well known at Wapping, it seems possible that he met her before his return to England in 1762. He was certainly not the man to indulge in a whirlwind courtship, which we must otherwise accept. On the other hand, Constable is clearly wrong in supposing that Mrs Cook was dead at the time he wrote the letter. Some of her furniture is now in the National Maritime Museum.

CHRISTOPHER LLOYD

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF SUTHERLAND AND EULER

It may perhaps be worth while, from the bibliographical point of view, to call attention to two books which have come my way since I wrote on eighteenth-century books on shipbuilding, etc., in 1947. Sutherland's *Britain's Glory or Shipbuilding Unvail'd* was printed in 1717 for four booksellers, Norris, Tracy, Bettesworth and Pickard, and was reissued in 1729 by Bettesworth, Fitzer and Midwinter. This was called a second edition, but was in fact identical with the first save for a new title-page and the addition of a frontispiece. Both these editions are well known, but it was new to me to find that in 1722 the book had appeared under the auspices of yet another bookseller, John Clark, with a reprinted title-page pasted to the stub of the old one. The second new find is an Italian translation of Euler's *Théorie Complete de la Construction et de la Manœuvre des Vaisseaux* published at Padova in 1776 under the title *Teoria Compita (sic) della Costruzione e del Maneggio de' Bastimenti*, with a long supplement containing notes by the translator, Stratico. How this compares with the other Italian edition (Naples, 1780) I do not know.

R. C. ANDERSON

THE OLDEST MIDSHIPMAN

With the assistance of the Passing Certificates and the Muster Books of ships in the Public Record Office I have recently traced the career of William Colmer (or Culmer), the 'oldest midshipman'. The results of my investigations are set out in the table on pp. 233-5.

It is interesting to try to fit into this framework the many legends about this character. Even his birthplace is a matter for speculation. It is variously stated as Bridgwater and Butleigh, in Somerset, but he was baptized at Lime, in Dorset. According to the visitation of the County of Somerset in 1623 the Colmores had recently migrated from Dorset to Somerset, so it would appear that the family was of gentle birth and was well established in these counties, but the Vicar of Butleigh assures me that there are no records of them in his parish. On the other hand, we are told that Billy was a connexion of the Hoods, and the father of Lord Hood was Vicar of Butleigh. Was it perhaps Mrs Colmer who was related to the Hoods and did she bear her son while on a visit to them, deferring his christening until her return home to Lime? The baptismal certificate bears the date 1743 and we must assume that this was the year of his birth, although various Muster Books state it to have been in 1739, 1750, 1751 and 1752.

The facts given by Captain Hoffman as having been related to him in 1812 by Lord Hood are palpably in error. According to this statement Hood first had Billy under him when he was promoted to Master and Commander, that after two years as midshipman Billy was discharged at his own request, that he disappeared for eight years before Hood met him again and took him back into the Royal Navy, and that he served with Hood in a frigate and battleship and that he sat for lieutenant nine years later. The facts are that Hood became a Master and Commander on 10 May 1754 when he was appointed to command the *Jamaica*, and he served on the North American station until late in 1757. Colmer does not appear in the *Jamaica's* Muster Book, and actually first served under Hood in 1758 when Hood commanded the *Vestal*, 32. Billy, who had already been in the Navy for three years, served five in the *Vestal* and only left her when she was paid off at the peace. He then disappeared, not for eight years but for less than ten months, before returning once more under Hood's command. He served with Hood at intervals from 1764 to

1774 and from 1787 to 1790, between times seeing service under Captains Gardner, Holloway and others. The only times when he was unemployed seem to have been three periods of about two years each in 1771-3, in 1780-2 and in 1783-5.

The famous goose story is variously told by different writers, though basically the versions are the same. They agree that a young lieutenant was sent to recall Billy, who had overstayed his leave, and that he was found basting a goose at his favourite inn. Colmer persuaded the lieutenant to look after the goose while he found someone to take it over but instead of doing so he returned on board, leaving the lieutenant in his full dress uniform basting the bird. In Parsons' account Billy was serving at the time in the *Royal William*, which would put the date as 1771, and the other characters are a lieutenant always afterwards known as 'Goose Gibbey' and 'Lieutenant Grimsby', first lieutenant of the *Royal William*. Can 'Gibbey' possibly have been Lieutenant Anthony Gibbes, who received his first commission on 2 June 1759? No other name would fit the story. The 'Old Sailor' produces a very different form of the tale, with Billy over 50 years of age and serving in Lord Hood's sea-going flagship, namely in the *Barfleur* about 1790. He calls the other character 'Lieut. E—' and Gardner tells us that there was a lieutenant Elliot in the *Barfleur* at this time, as her first lieutenant.

Of Billy's culinary exploits we find that he was Captain Ingelfield's cook in the *Scipio* in 1785. This, coupled with the goose story which must have been well-known in the fleet, would give some foundation for the taunts of Bob Perkins which are narrated by Gardner. When Parsons met Billy in 1795 it was at the India Arms in Gosport, and this author tells us that an officer left Billy sitting there, served a commission in the East Indies, and returned to find him still there. Perhaps he spent all the time between the attainment of his commission in 1790 and his death in 1802 cooking geese at this hostelry. One might have expected that, if he had indeed died there, some record of the death of such a noted character would have appeared in the local press; but a search has failed to discover any such entry.

One puzzling incident in Colmer's career is revealed by the Muster Books. On Christmas Day 1779 he 'ran' from the *Sandwich* at Portsmouth. She sailed for the West Indies that day and he is shown as 'run' in her Muster Book until April 1780 when he appears, over an obvious erasure, as discharged to the *Terrible*, to which ship Rodney appointed him as 4th Lieutenant. How did he manage to get to the West Indies and whatever possessed Rodney to give an acting commission to a run A.B.?

Another point of possible interest is that he was apparently in hospital for two short periods in 1766. Was this when he lost his eye or did this accident occur before he joined the Navy as Hood would appear to have implied?

Poor Billy. The only good his long deferred commission did him was to provide him with half-pay for all but a few weeks of the last twelve years of his life. Perhaps this was the intention of those in authority. The story told by Parsons that he died a Post Captain is quite untrue.

The principal published accounts of William Colmer which I have read are:

Nelsonian Reminiscences, by Lieut. G. S. Parsons, 1843, pp. 93-7; 1905, pp. 203-7.

Recollections of James Anthony Gardner 1775-1814 (written 1836), 1906, pp. 102-7.

Greenwich Hospital, by 'An old Sailor', 1826, pp. 7-10, 141.

A Sailor of King George, by Captain Frederick Hoffman, 1901.

Muster Book	Entered	From	Appeared	Rating	Discharged	To	Remarks
<i>Antelope</i>	—	—	—	—	—	—	Captain Holloway. No entry found for William, but John Colmer En. London (Vol) 8. 8. 55, Ap. 11. 8. 55 Supny, Victuals only. D. <i>Ramillies</i> 24. 8. 55. Captain A. Gardner. Supny. Victuals only. John Colmer En. 8. 8. 55 Supny. D. 20. 9. 55 No entry found. Vice-Admiral Thos. Smith entered same day. Supny. Victuals only. John Colmer En. & Ap. from <i>Falmouth</i> 12. 10. 55. Mrs. Mate. till 22. 6. 1756 then A.B. D. 9. 9. 56 <i>Badger</i> , prefermt. Supny. Victuals only by order of V. A. Boscawen.
<i>Ramillies</i>	25. 8. 1755	<i>Antelope</i>	—	Admls St	20. 9. 1755	<i>Windsor</i>	pr. order. (<i>Prince</i> and <i>Royal Ann</i> appear to have exchanged many men on this date)
<i>Windsor</i> <i>Falmouth</i>	21. 9. 1755	— <i>Ramillies</i>	— 21. 9. 1755	— Admiral's Retinue	— 23. 10. 1755	— <i>Newark</i>	No entry found. Made midshipman on death of the captain. John Colmer En. 22. 11. 56, Ap. 3. 12. 56, 2nd Lt. until 18. 3. 58 then 1st Lt. pr. order of Capt. Jones on decease of Capt. Donkley.
<i>Newark</i>	3. 10. 1755	<i>Falmouth</i>	25. 10. 1755	Ord.	22. 2. 1757	<i>St George</i>	
<i>St George</i>	23. 2. 1757	<i>Newark</i>	23. 2. 1757	Yns Gentleman recomd to the Admiral	19. 3. 1757	<i>Prince</i>	
<i>Prince</i>	23. 2. 1757	<i>St George</i>	29. 3. 1757	A.B.	22. 4. 1757	<i>Royal Ann</i>	
<i>Royal Ann</i> <i>Somerset</i> <i>Enterprise</i>	23. 4. 1757 — 9. 6. 1757	<i>Prince</i> — <i>Somerset</i>	23. 4. 1757 — 9. 6. 1757	A.B. — A.B. to 18. 3. 1758 then Mid.	16. 6. 1757 — 16. 4. 1758	<i>Enterprise</i> — <i>Duc d'Aquitaine</i>	

WILLIAM COLMER (cont).

Muster Book	Entered	From	Appeared	Rating	Discharged	To	Remarks
<i>Duc d'Aquitaine</i>	16. 4. 1758	<i>Enterprize</i>	—	—	17. 11. 1758	<i>Vestal</i>	Victuals only. Passage to Lisbon.
<i>Vestal</i>	16. 4. 1758	<i>Duc d'Aquitaine</i>	8. 11. 1758	Mid. to 11. 5. 1760 then Mrs Mate	8. 5. 1763	—	Captain Samuel Hood.
<i>Thunderer</i>	1. 3. 1764	Portsmouth	1. 3. 1764	A.B. to 10. 5. 1764 then Mid. to 11. 9. 1764 then Mrs Mate	26. 12. 1765	S.S. qr.	Captain Samuel Hood
<i>Superb</i>	14. 1. 1766 3. 6. 1766 26. 7. 1766	S.S. qr. — —	14. 1. 1766 3. 6. 1766 26. 7. 1766	— — Mid.	20. 5. 1766	S.S. qr.	Muster Book ends July 22nd 1766 Born Butleigh, Somerset.
<i>Romney</i>	4. 3. 1767	<i>Superb</i>	4. 3. 1767	Mrs Mate	28. 1. 1771	<i>Royal William</i>	Age on entry 27. D.p order Cap ⁿ Mich ^l Everitt. Born Butleigh, Somerset. Cdre S. Hood.
<i>Buckingham</i>	29. 1. 1771	<i>Romney</i>	29. 1. 1771	—	8. 2. 1771	<i>Royal William</i>	D. by Adty order. Supny. victuals only. Apparently for passage Chatham to Portsmouth.
<i>Royal William</i>	29. 1. 1771	<i>Buckingham</i>	9. 2. 1771	Mrs Mate	—	—	Muster book missing after March 1771
<i>Egmont</i>	5. 5. 1773	—	—	Mid. to 12. 5. 1773 then A.B.	5. 12. 1773	<i>Marlborough</i>	D.p. order Adl. Pye.
<i>Marlborough</i>	6. 12. 1773	<i>Egmont</i>	6. 12. 1773	Mid.	13. 2. 1774	<i>Maidstone</i>	Captain Edward Jekyll.
<i>Maidstone</i>	14. 2. 1774	—	14. 2. 1774	Mrs. Mate	30. 7. 1779	<i>Diamond</i>	Captain Samuel Hood. West Indies.
<i>Diamond</i>	30. 7. 1779	<i>Maidstone</i>	30. 7. 1779	Mid.	8. 11. 1779	<i>Sandwich</i>	Captain Alan Gardner.
<i>Mediator</i>	9. 11. 1779	<i>Diamond</i>	—	Mid.	22. 11. 1779	<i>Sandwich</i>	Passage Chatham to Portsmouth.
<i>Sandwich</i>	16. 11. 1779	<i>Mediator</i>	23. 11. 1779	A.B.	Run	Portsmouth	<i>Sandwich</i> sailed for West Indies 24. 12. 1779
<i>Terrible</i>	31. 5. 1780	—	—	4th Lt.	25. 12. 1779 D. 1. 4. 1780 D. 1. 6. 1780 16. 6. 1780	<i>Terrible</i> <i>Terrible</i> <i>Conqueror</i>	The D. entry is over an erasure. Two dates given. Com. 28. 5. 1780.

<i>Conqueror</i>	23. 7. 1780	<i>Terrible</i>	23. 7. 1780	4th Lt.	6. 2. 1780	Plymouth	pr. Commis, 23 July 1780. D. (The ship being paid off.) No entry found.
<i>Cambridge Buffalo</i>	22. 6. 1782	<i>Cambridge</i> Portsmouth	22. 6. 1782	A.B. to 11. 9. 1782 then Mid.	27. 12. 1782	<i>Fortitude, Vigilant</i>	Convey to Gibraltar. Captain J. Holloway.
<i>Fortitude</i>	27. 12. 1782	—	27. 12. 1782	—	4. 1. 1783	<i>Vigilant</i>	Supny. victuals only by order of Lord Shuldham. Passage Plymouth to Ports- mouth. Captain P. Bertie.
<i>Vigilant</i>	28. 12. 1782	<i>Buffalo</i> pr <i>Fortitude</i>	3. 1. 1783	Mid.	—	—	Captain J. Holloway Ship probably paid off 17. 2. 1783, war having ended 20. 1. 1783
<i>Scipio</i>	20. 8. 1785	Chatham	20. 8. 1785	Capt. Cook to 19. 11. 1785 then Mid.	8. 6. 1786	—	Born Bridgewater. Age on entry 35.
<i>Triumph</i>	9. 4. 17 286	Portsmouth	29. 4. 1786	A.B. to 6. 11. 1786 then Mid.	7. 10. 1787	<i>Barfleur</i>	Captain Inglefield Ship paid off 8. 6. 1786. Born Bridgewater. Age 35 in 1786.
<i>Barfleur</i>	8. 10. 1787	<i>Triumph</i>	8. 10. 1787	Mrs Mate to 12. 12. 1787 then Mid. to 19. 11. 1788 then Mrs Mate	17. 5. 1790	<i>Victory</i>	Vice Ad. Hood. Capt. J. Knight. D. by order of V. A. Hood. Born Bridgewater. Age 35 in 1787.
<i>Victory</i>	18. 5. 1790	<i>Barfleur</i>	18. 5. 1790	Mrs Mate	10. 12. 1790	<i>Hermione</i>	V. A. Hood. Capt. J. Knight to 12. 5. 1787, Then Capt. R. Calder. Born Bridgewater. Age 38 in 1790
<i>Hermione</i>	—	—	—	—	—	—	Vice Ad. Hood. Capt. J. Knight. D. promotion. No Muster Books for this period.
Half Pay <i>Prince</i>	22. 11. 1790 21. 5. 1795	<i>Victory</i>	—	Lieut. Lieut.	20. 5. 1795 8. 6. 1795	<i>Prince</i>	— Pr Com ⁿ 12. 5. 1795. D. by order Adl. Colpoys.
Half Pay	9. 6. 1795	<i>Prince</i>	—	Lieut.	17. 9. 1802	Died	—

'THE NINTH OF JANUARY,' OF ALL DAYS'

In recording the voyage of circumnavigation of 1577-9, Francis Pretty, one of Drake's men-at-arms, whose 'Famous Voyage of Sir Francis Drake into the South Sea and therehence about the whole Globe of the Earth' was printed by Hakluyt in his *Voyages*, narrates the story of the grounding of the *Golden Hind* in the East Indies, beginning his account, 'For of all other days upon the 9 of Januarie in the year 1579¹ wee ranne suddenly upon a rock'; as if, comments Drake's biographer Corbett in a footnote, 9 January were some anniversary. The 'rocke' was a reef in the Molucca Sea, and it might well have been the grave of their enterprise, for on it they were perched for twenty hours of agonized suspense and effort, held upright by the force of the wind, until suddenly and, as it seemed to them, miraculously, the wind swung round and they slid off into deep water. Drake's immediate and rather surprising reaction was to round on his chaplain, Francis Fletcher, and after a sort of mock trial (in which Drake 'sat cross-legged on a chest with a pair of pantouffles² in his hand'), had him fastened with a staple and padlock to the forehatch and condemned afterwards to wear a 'posy' bearing the inscription 'Francis Fletcher, the falsest knave that liveth'; in his sentence excommunicating him, his chaplain!, 'out of the Church of God and from all the benefits and graces thereof' and denouncing him 'to the devil and all his angels'.

There is no record of Fletcher's offence or of what anyone said during the hours they were stranded, but it has been surmised that Fletcher, formerly a partisan of Drake's enemy Doughty, recently executed, had seen in the disaster a judgement on Drake; he had already regarded as a judgement the loss of the ship *Marigold* in a storm soon after the execution, with Bright, the chief witness against Doughty, on board. Corbett, in a footnote, says, 'Could it be found what it' (the anniversary 9 January) 'was, some light might be thrown on Fletcher's offence and punishment.'

The kind of anniversary most likely to be noticed by anyone in those times, but particularly by a chaplain, would seem to be a Saint's Day. 'Of all other days . . .' What was this ominous date? I think the Saints' Calendar gives us the clue, for 9 January is St Julian's Day. Here is confirmation of the idea that Fletcher had been taking Drake to task in some fashion for Doughty's execution; for it was in St Julian's Bay that it took place, and the bay might be regarded as doubly and even triply ominous, for here also Magellan hanged one of his mutineers sixty years before; Drake's men found 'the gybbet and certain bones' when they landed. And this was the only bay in which they had trouble with natives on the voyage, Drake losing two valued men and narrowly escaping with his own life by priming one of the dead men's guns and shooting the leader.³

We can now perhaps picture Fletcher looking in his calendar for a divine clue, perhaps even for a topic for his last sermon, while the ship's fate hung in the balance, and fastening with grim satisfaction on this name 'St Julian'; making Drake (who had accused Doughty of witchcraft in conjuring up storms while alive) writhe with references to the poetic justice of Providence. Did Drake half-believe his chaplain's view of things in the stress of the event? If that were so, how natural the revulsion of feeling when the ship freed herself! We can understand the almost comic ferocity of his rounding on Fletcher when the danger passed, and Providence, smiling on the voyage, showed His true colours again.

G. W. MABBOTT

¹ In modern dating, 1580.

² Which are slippers, but why slippers?

³ Lopez Vaz, a Portuguese, who was captured with his account of Drake's voyages in 1586, says, 'This port I take to be accursed for that Magellan likewise put some to death there for the like offence' (of mutiny).

QUERIES

17. FRENCH GUN CARRIAGES. Can any reader supply me with any information concerning the design of French gun carriages of 1550? The ship I have in mind is a galleon of 1555, which carries four guns along the side and two at the stern, and is shown in pl. 8 of Mr Morton Nance's book *Sailing Ship Models*. The reader who knows more about the guns at this time than I do will probably be able to judge the weight, and therefore the design of the carriages, of these guns.

L. MILLAR

18. EARLY SHIP LANTERNS. In considering the early illumination of lighthouses and piers, it would be helpful to know details of ships' external lanterns for showing seawards at any dates before 1880. Presumably the panes were made of horn. When was glass first used? Are any particulars known of lantern illuminants, oil or candles? When was glass used for ships' ports?

D. ALAN STEVENSON

19. NAVAL SIXPENCES. The following letter was written by Captain Alexander Hood, then treasurer to the Royal Hospital, Greenwich:

‘Royal Hospital
Nov 8th 1777.

Sir,

Having received from the Treasurer of His Majesty's Navy, on account of Naval Six pences, for the year 1777, only £4800, for the support of the Hospital, and there having been born on the ship's Books in His Majesty's Navy for the present year upwards of fifty thousand Men, I beg the Board of Directors, will be pleased to apply to the Commissioners of His Majesty's Navy, for such sums to be advanced to me, from time to time, by way of Imprest, as shall be due to the Hospital, in proportion to the Number of Men annually borne. I am, Sir,

Your most obedient
humble Servant
Alex Hood'

To

J. Ibbetson Esq

If Captain Hood was correct, and £4800 (192,000 sixpences) was not the full amount due from the Commissioners for 50,000 men, what should the yearly number of Naval Sixpences have been and how did this scheme work? Also was the Royal Hospital financed solely in this way, or were there other grants?

BRIDPORT

20. ‘DOWN FUNNEL: UP SCREW.’ In reading through that wonderful series of articles by the late Admiral Ballard one is continually confronted with the problem of reduction of speed under canvas from the drag of the propeller when the engines were not working and the funnels were down. There are, however, certain very vital details in connexion with the operation of raising and lowering the propeller which are not clearly described or illustrated in any publication that I have been able to obtain. I write therefore in the hope that some member may be able to supply information on the following points.

(i) *Lifting propeller.* The propeller itself with its bearings was fitted into the ‘banjo frame’ in which it was raised and lowered. The foremost journal of the propeller had a tongue, and when the propeller was in use this tongue fitted accurately into a corresponding slot in the aftermost flange of the propeller-shaft which was known as the ‘cheese-head’. To lift the propeller this tongue and the groove in the cheese-head had to be in a vertical position so that the tongue could disengage itself from the slot.

Conversely, when lowering the propeller again into its working position the slot had to be absolutely in line with the tongue, otherwise the tongue could not enter the slot. How was this alignment ensured? The slightest lack of alignment would prevent the propeller engaging the

cheese-head, and it has to be remembered that the fit of the tongue in the groove must have been perfect and allow of no play. Presumably there was some mark on the propeller, or some 'stop' was fitted on it to ensure that it was absolutely vertical in the raised position, and a corresponding mark existing on a flange on the propeller-shafting in the screw alley, indicating when the slot in the cheese-head (which was under water and not visible) was also absolutely vertical, so that when the propeller was lowered it immediately engaged itself with the flange on the propeller-shaft without any difficulty. This alignment could probably have been achieved by rotating the shaft with the hand-turning gear until the mark on the shafting in the screw alley was in its proper position. All this must have been done with extreme accuracy, and it is apparent that many difficulties must have arisen in carrying out the operation especially in heavy weather, and it would be interesting to hear what these difficulties were and how they were overcome.

(ii) *Telescopic funnels*. Exactly how were these raised and lowered? Was it done by a number of blocks or pulleys such as Weston's Purchase, or was a rack-and-pinion gear fitted? A sketch showing the arrangement and how the funnel was locked and secured both in the up and down positions would be of great interest. Who was responsible for this work? Was it carried out under the supervision of the executive officer or the chief engineer of the ship? How long did it take; how many men were needed, and did they consist of seamen, engine-room ratings, or both?

C. J. GREENE

21. SHIPS' COMPLEMENTS. With reference to the recent *Queries and Answers* on the subject of early gun drill, I too have always been interested in the matter, as also in the system of making up ships' complements. How many men formed the average gun's crew; I gather it was between eight and ten? If this is correct a ship-of-the-line carrying 110 guns, such as the *Victory*, would have required at least 800 men to man her armament alone. Added to this would be the men to work the ship, day-men, idlers, marines and so on, which would bring the ships' complement up to 1100 or 1200 men, far in excess of the crew carried.

Did a gun's crew of say 8-10 men serve *two* guns, as it was not on every occasion that the ship would be engaged on both sides?

H. A. JOLY DE LOTBINIÈRE

22. SCURVY. Lime juice was not made a compulsory issue in the Royal Navy until 1795, and later in the Merchant Service, although it must have been known that, by using lemons, Schouten, in 1615, with a crew of 87, made a voyage of 16½ months without losing a man from the disease. It would be interesting to know why we allowed our sea enterprises to be crippled by scurvy for so long when prevention and cure were so easy, and must have been known for some time even before Schouten's voyage. It is hard to believe that mere apathy was to blame. Perhaps some reader can throw light into this dark corner of maritime history.

D. J. RITCHIE

23. INFERIOR SHIPS. From the sixteenth century onwards we have had matchless sea experience, and for a short time our design and construction were second to none. But in the succeeding centuries we have generally been in the second class. No doubt graft and other handicaps were no worse here than elsewhere, and at times our Court influence was a stimulus. Why then did not our special experience, and our dependence on the sea, give us the lead? We had successes, of course, too often following the lead of others whose ships had frightened us, for example, *La Gloire* and the *Rurik*, but far too many failures; whole classes of eighteenth-century line-of-battle-ships, fast brigs which, like the *Captain*, capsized, muzzle-loading guns retained too long (doubtless for safety, but one burst in a turret of the *Thunderer*). The story of our defective wooden ships is of course a nightmare right up to well into the nineteenth century, when a ship was sent to dodge the ice in the Arctic which would not sail nearer the wind than eight points in a good breeze.

Why have we been so backward for so long? Perhaps some reader can offer information on a big subject.

D. J. RITCHIE

24. 'TO WARM THE BELL.' Why does one talk about 'warming the bell'? Presumably it is a maritime expression by origin.

A. L. F.

25. SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY INSTRUCTIONS. The Historical MSS. Report and Appendix No. 6 Leconfield MSS. at Petworth House, Sussex, contains p. 304, item 31: 'Quarto paper, 1623.—Instructions to all officers belonging to the Navy, given by the Earl of Nottingham and Marquis of Buckingham, with a list of Admirals from the reign of King Edw. II to 1623 (71 pp. and 10 pp. of list of Admirals). In the first part of the volume are Orders and Instructions for the better government of the Navy.'

Also Item 32: 'Folio, 17th century.—Orders established by the Earl of Nottingham, Lord High Admiral, for the better settling the principal officers of the Navy, Etc. March 1, 1607. (10 pp.).'

'Pp. 11-76, Orders and Instructions to be established for the better government of His Majesty's Navie.'

'Pp. 77-178, Instructions given by George Duke of Buckingham, Lord High Admiral, for the direction and government of His Majesty's Navie.'

Can any member say whether these papers have ever been printed and published; and if so, where can they be found?

HAROLD P. WIGGINS

26. 'MOLGOGGER' AND 'PODGER'. I should be glad if any member can enlighten me as to the derivation of these terms. 'Molgogger' is the name given by tug masters to the belaying pins used for holding the slack of the tow-rope inboard along the bulwarks to clear the propeller. A 'podger', either of steel or wood, is a short bar with a point at one end and rounded at the other, used either for tightening rigging-screws or for beating down the bight of a loaded sling.

I. MACROBERT

ANSWERS

88. (1911.) SHANTY. The following comments can but reinforce the conclusions of Mr Lyman, who writes that 'The words shantyman and shanty are certainly American in origin....' The several music dictionaries consulted agree with the *Macmillan Encyclopedia of Music and Musicians* (p. 1727) which states that 'American sailors are said to have introduced the custom....' The *Dictionary of Americanisms* (Chicago, 1951, Vol. 2, 1509) considers *shanty boat* (1879), *shanty boatman* (1879) and *shanty boater* (1935) as Americanisms as well as *shanty* (1938), an abbreviated form of *shanty boat*. The *Dictionary of American English* (Vol. 4, p. 2084) also lists *shanty boat* and *shanty boatman* (both with an earliest date of 1879). American usage to-day appears to favour *chantey* or *chanty* rather than *shanty*. *Chantey*, *chanty*, 'a sailor's song...' appears in the *New Century Dictionary* (Vol. 1, p. 237), followed by *chanteyman*, *chantyman*. *Chanty* is also preferred by *Webster's New International Dictionary* (unabridged edition, 1947, p. 450). Joanna C. Colcord in *Sea Language comes Ashore* (New York, 1945, p. 163) defines shanty as 'a worksong used to aid labor at sea and sung for pleasure alongshore. (The name is probably derived from the Maine woodsmen's shanty or bunkhouse; derival of chantey from the French chantez is "an educated blunder", according to Philip Barry, authority on folksong.)' Bartlett, in his *Dictionary of Americanisms* (1889, p. 576), derives shanty from French chantier, which he defines as 'the hut put up in a French dock-yard'. The *Dictionary of Americanisms* (Vol. 2, p. 1509) derives the shanty of shanty boat, shanty boatman, shanty boater from Canadian French, chantier; *Webster's Dictionary* derives shanty from the French chantez. The plural form chanties and chanteys appear to co-exist in the United States. The earliest occurrence of shanty 'crudely built house...' is 1822 (*Dictionary of Americanisms*, Vol. 2, 1509). For a bibliography on 'Sea songs: sea shanties, songs of the rivers, boatmen and the Great Lakes' see Charles Hayward, *A Bibliography of North American Folklore and Folksong* (New York, 1951), pp. 659-668.

HENSLEY C. WOODBRIDGE

19. (1947.) DRY-LAND SHIPS. Since the Suffren ship seems to be of interest, a few details may be added. While the name *le Heros* does not appear to have been carved on the structure, there is no doubt that it was some Suffren commemoration; the land (until a few decades ago) was a Suffren family property, and the construction was provided by a relative of that family, the Rev. R. de Régis. Garcin's *Dictionnaire... de Provence* (1835) notes that the structure, built about a rough boulder, is about 100 ft. long, 13 ft. broad and 17 ft. high. M. E. Doin (*Le Sabord*, No. 2, 1929) says that the front has split into two parts. The carving and shaping of the block took place not later than late eighteenth century, as the dry-land ship is described, in 1802, in the *Statistique des Bouches du Rhône*, apparently compiled between 1790-2.

G. R.

19. (1951.) THE FIRST AIRCRAFT CARRIER. Giving the widest application to the word aircraft, it can be said that probably the very first aircraft-carriers were those ships which took part in the Admiralty trials of 1903, when the marine use of the Cody man-lifting kite was tested. These trials are described in an article by Mr S. F. Cody in *Pearson's Magazine* of 1903; this includes several photographs by the author.

In the article, Mr Cody made the suggestion that the kite could be flown from *submarine craft*, thus anticipating the German gyro-kite of the late war.

The Admiralty account of these trials of the Cody-Kite of 1903, would make very interesting reading.

It would be very interesting to find out which of these early aircraft ships sent out the first torpedo-carrying aircraft, as opposed to machines used just for spotting duties. Also, which ship used this torpedo weapon in actual warfare?

For the old carrier H.M.S. *Argus*, the Blackburn firm built a special type of torpedo-carrying aircraft known as the 'Blackburd'. This machine, a biplane of course, was arranged to land on

skids or runners after dropping its wheels on take-off. No arresting-wires were employed to check the machine on landing. This also was an anticipation of some of the latest methods.

W. ADAM WOODWARD

1. DAVIT. It might well be that English *davit* is derived from Old French *daviet* defined in Godefroy's *Lexique de l'ancien français* (p. 117) as 'instrument employé pour forcer une serrure' or from Old French *daviot* defined by Godefroy by 'davier' (p. 117). On the other hand, the *N.E.D.* (Vol. 3, p. 47) notes that the word also appeared as *david* and states that *davit* is 'apparently an application of that Christian name, as in the case of other machines and tools'. The earliest use of the modern form of the word cited by the *N.E.D.* dates from 1622, when R. Hawkins used *dauyd*. Hatzfeld and Darmesteter, in their *Dictionnaire général de la langue française* (Vol. 1, p. 624), note that *daviet* appears in Rabelais, and they consider *daviet* to be a diminutive form of David and another example of the name of a tool derived from a personal name. The derivation of *davit* from the Spanish *gavieta* would seem to be only possible indirectly, if there could be shown to exist any relation between Spanish *gavieta* and French *daviet*. All the Spanish dictionaries at hand follow the *Diccionario de la lengua española* (1947, p. 637) in deriving Spanish *gavieta* 'perhaps from Spanish *gavia*; in Provençal *gaviteau*, in Italian *gavitello*'. *Gavia* occurs in Spanish in the thirteenth-century *Siete partidas*, in the early fifteenth century in Pero Tafur and in the late fifteenth century in Columbus's account of his first voyage. The word *gavieta* evidently does not occur in Navarrette's famous collection of sixteenth-century voyages. It could be quite possible that Spanish *gavieta* could have been derived from the Italian, for Terlingen has demonstrated conclusively that Italian nautical terms entered the Spanish language as early as the late thirteenth century.

It is tentatively suggested therefore that English *davit* is derived from either Old French *deviet* or from Old French *daviot*. The Old French as well as the English are apparently both derived from the proper name David. Until the Mediterranean terms *gavieta*, *gaviteau*, *gavitello* have been studied from the historical and etymological points of view, there would seem to be no reason to connect them, except distantly, with English *davit*; English nautical terms of Spanish origin do not appear to be very numerous. At the moment I am unable to quote from Jal or the recent Italian nautical dictionary. They might yield information with regard to dating either *gavieta* or *gavitello*.

HENSLEY C. WOODBRIDGE

2. THE BITTER END. R. C. Leslie (*Old Sea Ways, Wings and Words*, 1930 ed., p. 1, n.) says: 'The bitter end' of a cable (an old sea-term now obsolete) was that part which remained abaft the bitts within board. 'To veer away to the bitter end' meant, therefore, to the extreme length of one cable, and hence, I believe, the origin of the phrase, so often used by landmen, 'to the bitter end'.

Further on (p. 275), the author says again: . . . the 'bitter end' was that part of the cable abaft the bitts, and therefore within board when the ship was at anchor; hence the term 'to the bitter end', 'We veered cable to the bitter end', etc. Mr Pepys, in his Diary, complains of speculations, or of certain dealings in 'bitter-ends', among the dockyard officials of his time.

I have received the following from The Belfast Ropework Company Ltd. 'The best authority we know on this subject is *The Ashley Book of Knots* (1944) which says: A cable is always turned around the bitts . . . , a turn in the starboard bitt being the reverse of the turn in the port bitt. The end of the cable abaft the bitts is the "bitter end". The common expression "reached the bitter end" refers to a situation of extremity and has nothing at all to do with lees and dregs and other unpalatable things. It means literally that someone has "got to the end of his rope". As far as we know this term has never been used in rope making.'

J. E. DE C. I.

There appears to be reliable authority for the nautical use of this expression. *Murray's Dictionary* gives:

1627 Capt. Smith *Seaman's Gram.* vii, 30 A bitter is but the turne of a Cable about the Bits, and veare it out by little and little. And the Bitters end is that part of the Cable doth stay within board.

1630 J. Taylor *Wks*, To let fall an anchor, which being done, the tide running very strong, brought our ship to so strong a bitter, that the fast which the Portugals had upon us brake.

A Naval Expositor, by Thomas Riley Blanckley, 1750, gives:

Any turn of a Cable about the Bitts, is called a Bitter, so as that the Cable may be let out by little and little. And when a Ship is stopped by a Cable, they say, she is brought up by a Bitter. Also that End of the Cable which is wound or belayed about the Bitts, is called the Bitter-end of the Cable.

H. T. A. B.

The Sailor's Word-Book, by Admiral W. H. Smyth, 1867, provides full definitions of 'Bitter' and 'Bitter-end'. [Ed. M.M.]

3. CRUISER. *Anson's Voyage*, written by Anson's chaplain on that voyage, from Anson's papers and published under Anson's direction, uses the word *cruizer* or *cruiser* freely. The quotations given below are from the Everyman's edition, and show two shades of meaning. The voyage started in 1740.

P. 43: 'And on the 2nd of December, in the morning we saw a sail in the N.W. quarter, and made *Gloucester's* and *Tryal's* signals to chace, and half an hour after we let out our reefs and chased with the squadron... But at seven in the evening, finding that we did not near the chace, and that the *Wager* was very far astern, we shortened sail, and made a signal for the cruizers to join the squadron.'

P. 85, heading of chapter ix: 'Observations and directions for facilitating the passage of our future cruizers round Cape Horn.'

S. H. S. MOXLEY

I have not come across an earlier mention of the word *Cruiser* than 1806, but for years I have known of one of the origins of the word. In *Our Iron Clad Ships* by the late E. J. Reed, C.B., 1869, chapter vi, 'Sailing of the Iron Clads': 'In fact the comparatively limited time which the coal carried by any ship would enable her to proceed under steam alone would have rendered the performance of long voyages and distant cruising services almost impossible without a considerable spread of sail.'

P. 126, 'All our iron-clads, however, have a certain amount of sail-power as well as steam-power, except those specially constructed for coast defence and for ramming, and the new turret-ships *Thunderer* and *Devastation*, which have an unusually large coal supply, and can keep the sea for a considerable time, but which are not intended to perform the distant voyages and continuous sea services which cruising ships in our Navy have to undertake.'

P. 131, 'These facts will serve to show the reader that our iron-clads, whatever their imperfections as sailing ships, are not deficient in sailing powers as far as they are requisite in sea-going cruizers possessing steam-power also.'

Hence it appears that the words *Cruising* and *Cruisers* have been closely associated with the idea of long ocean passages, and this in the past was true on the old Pacific Station, from Cape Horn to Point Barrow. For example, the voyage of the *Zealous* (6027 tons and 800 h.p.) to Esquimalt in 1867, was largely performed under sail. These large iron-built screw ships sailed much better than the smaller ships whose hulls did not hold the water so well.

F. V. L.

7. ADMIRAL LAWSON. If Lawson did indeed make the well-known remark about not meddling with politics, it must have been far more 'out of character' than it would have been coming from Blake. Lawson's political activities caused his replacement by Badiley as Vice Admiral in 1656 and led to his imprisonment for a short time in 1657, while after his reappointment in 1659 he took a leading part in events leading up to the Restoration.

As Dr Ireland says, the remark is usually attributed to Blake, but I have never seen 'chapter and verse' given. It would certainly be interesting to know where it first appears. Campbell in his *Lives of the Admirals* quotes it from *Lives British and Foreign* (1704), and states that Wood's *Fasti Oxonienses* (1692) 'says nearly the same thing, though in other words', but both these works may have been quoting from something earlier still.

R. C. ANDERSON

The remark 'It is not for us to meddle with politics but to keep the foreigners from fooling us' can be found in the *Life of Robert Blake*, written by 'a Gentleman bred in the Family'. He states it was uttered shortly after the Battle of Portland, but most authorities consider it was probably spoken before Blake sailed on his last cruise, somewhere in March 1656. He and Mountagu were then dealing with political trouble in the fleet. Lawson, who was hostile to the government, suddenly threw up his command. He had been removed from command of the Channel fleet, where he had great opportunities for mischief, and placed in the fleet about to go to Spain, where he would be comparatively harmless since he would be under Mountagu's eye. Lawson, who was in the secrets of the Levellers, was suspected of plotting with them and Charles to restore the monarchy. Lawson resigned because he either saw the game was up, or because he feared his secret had been discovered. Various other officers followed his example, which was the occasion of Blake's famous remark.

It seems a common-sense, terse remark, which sums up the situation and well in keeping with Blake's character. The actual words were not 'to meddle with politics', but 'to mind State affairs'.

A summary of his career may be found in Laird Clowes's *Naval History*, Vol. 2, p. 178.

J. R. POWELL

NOTICE

With reference to the Review on p. 156, *M.M.*, May 1952, information has been received that *Admiral Sir Thomas Louis, Bt.*, by our member Dr H. B. Louis, can now be had direct from Messrs B. H. Blackwell, Ltd, Broad Street, Oxford, price 5s.

REVIEWS

CAPTAIN JAMES COOK, R.N. A Bibliographical Excursion. By SIR MAURICE HOLMES. Francis Edwards Ltd. Price £2. 10s. 0d.

Everyone interested in Cook knows that Sir Maurice Holmes's bibliography is the most useful book on the subject published since Kitson's biography. Unfortunately, only 150 copies of the first edition, which appeared in 1936, were for sale. This second edition is also limited, not quite so severely, but severely enough. It has the enormous advantage of a full index, illustrations of many title pages and a selected list of books and articles published during the past fifteen years. In this expanded form it lists not only all the first editions but other relevant and original material as well. The literature on Cook almost rivals that on Nelson: everything is here, from the original quartos to the anonymous poems and 'The Death of Captain Cook: a grand Serious-Pantomimic-Ballet, as now exhibiting in Paris with uncommon applause'. Only reprints, translations and popular modern works are omitted.

No doubt it would be wiser for an amateur to refrain from ascending into the bibliographical stratosphere, but Sir Maurice's dedication to all fellow disciples is so generous that it emboldens me to make two comments. A particularly useful section of the book is a list of articles on Cook which have appeared in periodicals, notably *The Mariner's Mirror*. Among them, for instance, is Mr Smith's valuable article in the *Journal* of the Warburg and Courtauld Institute; but Mr Mitchell's interesting analysis of Zoffany's picture of the death of Cook in the *Burlington Magazine* for March 1944 is omitted. And I am sure students would welcome the British Museum reference for the originals of the Matra-Banks and Cook-Douglas correspondence instead of allusions to the printed and often garbled versions of such MSS. Perhaps such references are outside the purview of the bibliographer; nevertheless they would save an enormous amount of time and trouble hunting through the Museum catalogue.

Even though an 'e' has gone adrift at the bottom of page 28, let us, in this imperfect world, welcome with enthusiasm a book which does what it sets out to do almost perfectly.

CHRISTOPHER LLOYD

BOATS AND BOATMEN. By T. C. LETHBRIDGE. Thames and Hudson Ltd., 244 High Holborn, W.C. 1. Price 15s. net.

It is pleasant to read a book on the evolution of ships and vessels that is written by one who is both an archaeologist and a seaman himself. This book is not any attempt to trace the various rigs and types of vessels that have arisen in the course of the years, but it does show how various customs and ideas have come about and how various shapes of boats have a common ancestry, at any rate in the author's opinion. Mr Lethbridge has some very decided notions as to the origins and meanings of many old sea ways and methods, but unlike so many people he never lays down the law, and quite readily admits that if he can be proved wrong no one will be more pleased than he himself; for that is his main theme, that there has been so little real research into the origins of nautical history that no one really does know anything much about them, and in fact much of what is thought to be known is really no better than guess-work; hence the author's slightly provocative attitude. This book is one of a number of volumes called 'The Past in the Present', and is written with the idea of showing how the old sea influences are still with us to-day, and are likely to be as long as men go to sea at all in any form of craft, both in the way we build our vessels and in the way we use them. As this is one of a popular series the writing has been kept as non-technical as possible and the author says in his introduction that in order to avoid long explanations of technical words he simply has not used them. This, of course, may upset the experts, but then this book is not meant for them. All the same, the expert will find things that will interest him even if he does

not agree. Mr Lethbridge advances ideas as to the reason for certain decorations in boats and why the seaman is so conservative and similar things, things simple in themselves but in some cases productive of much controversy. Undoubtedly a very pleasant book for the general reader and a somewhat provocative one for the student. The book is illustrated by 41 sketches by the author, in most cases simple line-drawings to give the general shape and outline of the vessel under survey, or a detail of the same ship or boat, quite unambitious but very effective and to the point.

The publishers have also done their work well with good clear print and decent paper, and a minimum of misprints.

H. O. H.

JOSEPH CONRAD. By OLIVER WARNER. Longmans. Price 10s. 6d. net.

The number of those who have written extensively, and with art, in languages other than their own, must be extremely small, particularly if the dead languages be excluded. In this select list, the late Mr Joseph Conrad occupies a very high position. It was an extraordinary feat to publish *Almayer's Folly* only eight years after landing in the country of his adoption, and to follow it with novels and stories many of which include descriptions of the sea and seamen which rank among the finest in our literature; for there can be no doubt about the quality of his prose. There are no crudities, no solecisms; the utmost the discerning critic will find will be an occasional sentence that is perhaps a thought too perfect, that an Englishman would somehow not quite have written, but they are rare and difficult to find.

Conrad suffered something of the usual eclipse after his death, but is now surely, if slowly, climbing back to his proper position; Mr Warner's book is thus opportune. It is divided into two parts. In the first he gives us a brief biography, relating the details of Conrad's life to the respective novels and stories that they inspired. This is the best part of the book. Mr Warner's narrative is clear, unpretentious and informative. In the second half, he attempts to analyse the various works, and here he is not so successful. He seems to lack the vocabulary to get to the heart of the matter, and is too apt to employ such phraseology as 'Conrad worked his adjectives hard in this story' or 'the understatement is terrific'. Not thus will the essence of Conrad be distilled. With his general assessment of each work, however, few will quarrel, and he is probably right in naming *Nostramo* as the greatest, untypical though it is in some respects.

It will be of interest to seamen that Mr Warner emphasizes Conrad's surprisingly clear understanding of the nature of naval warfare and the correct use of a fleet (as shown in a letter to his friend, Christopher Sandeman, during the First World War) together with the fact that he had none of the distaste for the naval officer sometimes displayed by the Merchant Marine. It would have given him pleasure that Mr Warner's valuable book is dedicated to a distinguished admiral and his lady.

J. G. B.

WOODEN WALLS IN ACTION. By FRANK C. BOWEN. Halton and Co. Ltd. 1951. Price 15s.

On first turning over the pages of this book, the immediate impression was that here was a reprint of a former work, but closer examination showed that this was not so. The impression was no doubt created by one's being familiar with the author's style, coupled with a recent study of *The Macpherson Collection*, visits to the National Maritime Museum, and frequent references to many of the actions in connexion with other nautical interests.

In dealing briefly with some sixty-eight actions, major or minor, each illustrated by an engraving, lithograph or aquatint, the author has provided a selective survey covering over 500 years of naval history, from Sluys, 1340, to Lissa, 1866. It is, however, more a book of popular appeal, very suitable for the young enthusiast, rather than for the serious research worker or advanced student of naval craft or tactics. The student will doubtless find a number of contentious points; with space limited to, say, 700 words to describe the epic fight of the *Shannon* and the *Chesapeake*, or the Battle of Navarin, some item of detail, cause, or effect is bound to be overlooked or compressed.

Medal collectors, particularly those specializing in the Naval General Service Medal, 1793-1840, will find interesting background reading in the second half of the book.

From the viewpoint of one interested in flags, I think the illustrations could, perhaps, have been more carefully selected; many of them (as is not unusual with old drawings) show inconsistencies, such as the engraving of the action at Vigo, 1702. Here there appear to be two British commanders-in-chief, each with a Union Flag at the main, and the ships are wearing the 1707 ensign, with the Union in the canton, while the ships on Lake Champlain, 1776, are clearly wearing 1801 ensigns. Numerous other similar faults abound, but the blame must fall primarily on the artists rather than on the author. It might, however, have been possible to have chosen better examples.

While writing of flags, I must mention the appropriate signal hoist shown as being made by Collingwood during the gale after Trafalgar; the flags are clearly '241', which in the signal book reads 'Quit, and withdraw men from, ships captured, after having destroyed or disabled them, if time permits, that the enemy may not carry them off'. What a wealth of meaning in one three-flag hoist, and, in view of the prevailing conditions, how hazardous its execution!

ALEC A. PURVES

THE NORFOLK WHERRY. Published by the Norfolk Wherry Trust, Augustine Steward's House, Tombland, Norwich. Price 9d.

This little booklet of eleven pages of letterpress and four of illustrations has been produced by the Norfolk Wherry Trust to call attention to the Trust's existence and to what it is trying to do. As probably most members of the Society for Nautical Research know, the Trust, which came into being in 1949, has now got a rejuvenated wherry, the *Albion*, trading on the Norfolk Broads. Owing to the fact that many repairs, etc., had to be done to the *Albion* before she was fit for service, the income derived from her trading has not, up to date, covered all the expenses and, therefore, more members and their subscriptions are wanted for the Trust, although once the original debt is cleared off it is considered probable that the *Albion* will pay for herself. The pamphlet under review gives a short account of why the Trust came to be started and what it has already done together with a short history of Norfolk wherries in general and the *Albion* in particular. Having read these notes one cannot help but admire the enthusiasm of the founders of the Trust and the hard work that must have been put into it to get it on its present footing, but it is equally apparent that at present there can be no sitting back: the hard work and enthusiasm are wanted as much now as in the beginning, if the scheme is going really to succeed. Anyone, even only faintly interested in the Norfolk wherry, will certainly not lose the value of his money if he invests ninepence in getting this little book and he will, presumably, have helped in a small way towards preserving a very interesting and unique form of sailing vessel.

H. O. H.

SYRIA, xxviii (1951), pp. 101-23 and pls. ix-xii; ANTIQUITÉS DE BETH-MARÉ. By HENRI SEYRIG. (Librairie Paul Geuthner, Paris.)

The maritime interest of Monsieur Seyrig's paper is truly extraordinary. The greater part is devoted to a minute and scholarly discussion of a recent discovery of the very first order, an almost intact *ex voto* model of a classical merchant ship. Not only is the model of superb workmanship but one has the feeling that the craftsman was paying some attention to scale. Moreover, the model bears a date that is almost certainly the date of its manufacture. Monsieur Seyrig's publication is worthy of his discovery. Four full-page plates of exceptional clarity are supplemented by illustrations in the text, and he has added a carefully drawn-up table of the principal measurements. My only complaint is that he has not allowed himself one final extravagance and given us her lines. The omission is doubtless due to a somewhat unnecessary lack of confidence in a length-beam ratio of approximately $2\frac{1}{2}:1$. The model itself is now preserved in the Beyrouth Museum, and it is to be hoped that one or other of our national museums will take immediate steps to obtain a replica.

The model is fashioned entirely in bronze. The hull itself was cast in one piece, and various details cast separately and soldered into place. The overall length is 15 in., and great attention has been given to accuracy and finish. Prominent features include two wales running the length of the vessel, and a ram of square section that is essentially a continuation of the keel; cf. the term *προεμβολίς*. We may also note the unusually well defined *apostis* which would seem to clinch my theory that it was the classical *πάροδος* to which the Anon. PBPP refers when it describes *ἡ ἐπηγκενίς τὸ ἄρτι λεγόμενον καταπατόν*. The figure-head, a grotesque monster, is unexpectedly elaborate, but the *ἀφλαζτα* are treated very simply though of enormous size.

The rudders are missing, but we may perhaps detect their point of attachment in the small hole on either quarter that was adapted to receive a rivet when the model was converted into a lamp. The two masts have vanished completely, but it is still possible to see where they were stepped. It is possible that a further sail could be set from the sprit-like stempost, but it is doubtful if this was the case in the model though two projections seem singularly fitted to that purpose. It is almost certain that the model was not furnished with oars, but various details suggest that they were present in the original.

In general appearance the ship is almost identical with that depicted on the Imperial coins of Smyrna. Monsieur Seyrig is probably unduly disturbed by the fact that she is equipped with a ram though having the lines of a merchantman. The mosaics of Ostia and Althiburus afford plenty of parallels with their *pontones* and *cladivatae* that seem just as numerous as the *corbitae*. Pal. Grec. 367 shows that it was the *corbita* with her lack of sheer forward and vestigial *aphlaston* that was eventually to prevail even in the Levant, but it is surprising that the ram lingered on for at least two centuries after Actium. Two separate traditions seem involved; that of the *ponto* and *cladivata*, where the ram was bulbous and an essential part of the hull form, and that embodied in the Beth-Maré model where the ram is little more than a continuation of the keel. Beside the *ponto* the Beth-Maré ship looks quite archaic with her pronounced *aphlasta* and high bulwarks forward recalling those of the Athenian trireme, while her simple ram seems to go back to Phoenician prototypes. Nevertheless, the epigraphical evidence afforded by the inscription more than bears out the comparatively late date suggested by the coin of Smyrna alluded to above.

The inscription records that the model was dedicated to Seus Baithmares in the year 232. Monsieur Seyrig argues convincingly that the era employed is that of Sidon which began in 111 B.C. Hence the ship is Hadrianic. As a numismatist I rejoice to find such satisfactory corroboration of the evidence of the coins, and I am encouraged to consider further the possibility of publishing a corpus of all coins bearing on the naval architecture of antiquity. As a student of nautical archaeology I venture to congratulate Monsieur Seyrig on the appearance of a paper that will be fundamental to every future discussion of the Roman merchant vessel.

R. H. D.

FIVE NAVAL JOURNALS, 1789-1817. Edited by Rear-Admiral H. G. THURSFIELD, F.S.A. Published by the Navy Records Society, Vol. xci. 1951. Price 45s.

As probably most members of the Society for Nautical Research know, the Navy Records Society was founded in order to print rare or unpublished works of naval history; therefore, it is to be expected that a volume issued under these auspices will be a book somewhat out of the common and very well worth while. The latest one, for 1951, is certainly no exception and worthily holds its own with its predecessors. It is entitled *Five Naval Journals, 1789-1817* and consists of the accounts of their lives in the Service of five very different sorts of people, written by themselves over the years mentioned, though no single career covers the whole period. It would, of course, be hard to choose a more interesting time of naval service than that covered by the book under review, but it is not only that which makes this latest publication of the Navy Records Society particularly interesting, but also because the Journals which make up this volume, are all written by men not particularly famous or well known, but who were the equivalent in the navy of their day, to the modern man-in-the-street.

A pleasant feature of this book is the short introduction the editor gives to each Journal in the way of a biography of the writer; in some cases it would have been interesting to have had even more than is given, but in one or two that is impossible; all that is known is published, but one would have liked to have been told why that evidently smart and keen sailor, Robert Mercer Wilson, deserted after rising from a pressed seaman to the rank of second master; unfortunately there is no account of him that is known to be in existence after he deserted his ship H.M. Gun-Brig *Confounder*, in March 1811 when serving as second master.

The first Journal is by a chaplain, Edward Mangin, M.A., who was only in the Service for a few months in 1812, and the reason he gives for retiring so early in his naval career is because he felt a clergyman was out of place in a ship-of-war; if he felt like that, this particular clergyman probably was out of place. The next is by a Scottish surgeon, Peter Cullen, who made a career of the navy and who kept his Journal 'solely for the perusal of my own family'. As the editor suggests in his introduction to this writer, he could have given a much fuller account of his life in the Service of his day than he has done; he is too occupied with telling everyone what fine fellows his messmates were. On the other hand, he does not give a very favourable impression of Lord St Vincent's behaviour to the captains under his command, though he does finish up by saying 'The Earl was a polite man' and admits he was 'one of our best admirals'. In spite of these peculiarities Cullen's Journal gives a very good insight into life in the navy of Nelson's day.

The third and longest Journal is that of Robert Mercer Wilson, who was in the Service from 1805-1810. As has been previously mentioned in this review, Wilson was pressed into the navy having returned from a voyage from Jamaica only three days before. He was then aged 20 and, as the editor points out, obviously a smart young seaman, as within a month of his joining H.M. Frigate *Unité*, he was made a signalman by the first lieutenant. Wilson describes in some detail what his duties were, which description would fit in very well with what the young signalman of to-day has to do, that is as far as visual signalling is concerned, of course. Towards the end of his Journal, to fill up the MS. book, as the editor says, Wilson writes what he calls an Addenda in which he describes the various duties of the crew and how they live and have their being in the ship, also what happens to a man on first joining such as interviewing the first lieutenant and the surgeon. There is also an interesting description of getting a vessel ready for sea and unmooring her, and how the foretopmen 'clap on the nippers' when the cable is being got in.

Charles Abbot's Journal is the next one, and when he wrote it he was a midshipman eighteen years old. This is his official Journal, which every midshipman had to keep as he still does to-day, of the voyage out to China in H.M.S. *Alceste* in 1816, with Lord Amherst who was going out as Ambassador, on board with his suite. Unfortunately on the journey home while still in Chinese waters, the *Alceste* was stranded and became a total loss and Abbot gives an interesting description of the 'Robinson Crusoe' life led by the ship's company after the disaster.

The fifth Journal comprises the 'Orders and Regulations for the Government and Discipline of His Majesty's Ship *Hyperion*' as put forth by her captain, William Pryce Cumby, in 1811. In his introduction to this part, the editor gives a nice little story concerning Captain Cumby when still a lieutenant, and the Earl of St Vincent, which story sheds some more light on St Vincent's character and which certainly gives a different impression to that given by Surgeon Cullen's estimate of the great admiral.

Finally there are some eleven letters, all written by men on the lower-deck; letters which, though possibly above the usual lower-deck standard, show that there must have been a considerable number of men of good education serving as seamen and that the navy was not entirely manned by the lowest of the low, which is what quite a number of writers try to make out was the case.

Besides an excellent index the editor has included some biographical notes on all the officers mentioned in the first four Journals, which make a very valuable addition to a most interesting volume. After reading these Journals and letters, hitherto all unpublished, one wonders how many similar accounts there may be still in existence, in spite of two major wars with their demands for waste paper, etc. How were these accounts saved; were they in the hands of people who realized their value and interest, before the last war? The discovery or perhaps one should say the publication of these Journals and letters just reviewed, gives one to hope that there may be others equally interesting which may be forthcoming in the future.

Vol. 10 onwards at 10s. 6d. each (postage 5d.). The index will be supplied free to purchasers of a complete volume or sold separately for 2s. each.

Details of back numbers available will be supplied on request. (Published by the Cambridge University Press, 200 Euston Road, London, N.W. 1.)

The following other publications of the Society are at present available for sale:

OCCASIONAL PUBLICATIONS: No. 5, *Lists of Men-of-War, 1650-1700. Part I. English Ships.* Compiled by R. C. Anderson. *Part II. French Ships.* Compiled by Pierre Le Conte. *Part III. Swedish Ships.* Compiled by H. J. Borjeson. *Danish-Norwegian Ships.* Compiled by P. Holck. *German Ships.* Compiled by W. Vogel and H. Szymanski. *Part IV. Ships of the United Netherlands.* Compiled by A. Verugdenhil. *Part V. Indexes.* EACH PART 2s. 6d. (POSTAGE 2d.)

REPRINTS: *The Rye River Barges*, by Leopold A. Vidler.

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The Battle of Trafalgar, by Rear-Admiral A. H. Taylor. Price 7s. 6d.

MARITIME MISCELLANY SERIES, No. 1, *The Van de Veldes*, by W. Voorbeytel Cannenburg.

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(Each, price 2s. 6d. except where otherwise stated.)

PLANS: Model-maker's Plans of the *Victory*, 10 plans on 3 sheets from those used in the restoration of 1923-35. (Price 21s.)

Enquiries for any of these should be addressed to The Hon. Secretary, Society for Nautical Research, National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, S.E. 10.

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